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A SIMPLETON.

A Story of the Day.

By CHARLES READE.

[At the Author's particular request this story is not illustrated.]

CHAPTER XXVII.

MRS. STAINES uttered a sharp cry, and seized the ring. Her eyes dilated over it, and she began to tremble in every limb; and at last she sank slowly back, and her head fell on one side like a broken lily. The sudden sight of the ring overpowered her almost to fainting.

Falcon rose to call for assistance; but she made him a feeble motion not to do so.

She got the better of her faintness, and then she fell to kissing the ring, in an agony of love, and wept over it, and still held it, and gazed at it through her blinding tears.

Falcon eyed her uneasily.

But he soon found he had nothing to fear. For a long time she seemed scarcely aware of his presence; and, when she noticed him, it was to thank him, almost passionately.

'It was my Christie you were so good to: may heaven bless you for it: and you will bring me his letter, will you not?'

'Of course I will.'

'Oh, do not go yet. It is all so strange: so sad. I seem to have lost my poor Christie again, since he did not die at sea. But

no, I am ungrateful to God, and ungrateful to the kind friend that nursed him to the last. Ah, I envy you that. Tell me all. Never mind my crying. I have seen the time I could not cry. It was worse then than now. I shall always cry when I speak of him, ay, to my dying day. Tell me, tell me all.'

Her passion frightened the egotist, but did not turn him. He had gone too far. He told her that, after raising all their hopes, Dr. Staines had suddenly changed for the worse, and sunk rapidly; that his last words had been about her, and he had said, 'My poor Rosa, who will protect her?' That, to comfort him, he had said he would protect her. Then the dying man had managed to write a line or two, and to address it. Almost his last words had been, 'Be a father to my child.'

'That is strange.'

'You have no child? Then it must have been you he meant. He spoke of you as a child more than once.'

'Mr. Falcon, I have a child; but born since I lost my poor child's father.'

'Then I think he knew it.

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They say that dying men can see all over the world: and I remember, when he said it, his eyes seemed fixed very strangely, as if on something distant. Oh, how wonderful this all is. May I see his child, to whom I promised——'

The artist in lies left his sentence half completed.

Rosa rang, and sent for her little boy.

Mr. Falcon admired his beauty, and said, quietly, 'I shall keep my vow.'

He then left her, with a promise to come back early next morning with the letter.

She let him go only on those conditions.

As soon as her father came in, she ran to him with this strange story.

'I don't believe it,' said he. 'It is impossible.'

She showed him the proof, the ruby ring.

Then he became very uneasy, and begged her not to tell a soul. He did not tell her the reason, but he feared the insurance office would hear of it, and require proofs of Christopher's decease, whereas they had accepted it without a murmur, on the evidence of Captain Hamilton and the 'Amphitrite's' log-book.

As for Falcon, he went carefully through Staines's two letters, and, wherever he found a word that suited his purpose, he traced it by the usual process, and so, in the course of a few hours, he concocted a short letter, all the words in which, except three, were facsimiles, only here and there a little shaky; the three odd words he had to imitate by observation of the letters. The signature he got to perfection by tracing.

He inserted this letter in the original envelope, and sealed it very carefully, so as to hide that the seal had been tampered with.

Thus armed, he went down to Gravesend. There he hired a horse and rode to Kent Villa.

Why he hired a horse, he knew how hard it is to forge handwriting, and he chose to have the means of escape at hand.

He came into the drawing-room, ghastly pale, and almost immediately gave her the letter; then turned his back, feigning delicacy. In reality he was quaking with fear lest she should suspect the handwriting. But the envelope was addressed by Staines, and paved the way for the letter; she was unsuspecting and good, and her heart cried out for her husband's last written words: at such a moment what chance had judgment and suspicion in an innocent and loving soul?

Her eloquent sighs and sobs soon told the caitiff he had nothing to fear.

The letter ran thus:—

'MY OWN ROSA,

'All that a brother could do for a beloved brother Falcon has done. He nursed me night and day. But it is vain. I shall never see you again in this world. I send you a protector, and a father to your child. Value him. He has promised to be your stay on earth, and my spirit shall watch over you.

'To my last breath,

'Your loving husband,

'CHRISTOPHER STAINES.'

Falcon rose, and began to steal on tiptoe out of the room.

Rosa stopped him. 'You need not go,' said she. 'You are our friend. By-and-by I hope I shall find words to thank you.'

'Pray let me retire a moment,' said the hypocrite. 'A husband's last words: too sacred—a stranger.' and he went out into the garden.

There he found the nursemaid Emily, and the little boy.

He stopped the child, and made love to the nursemaid; showed her his diamonds—he carried them all about him—told her he had thirty thousand acres in Cape Colony, and diamonds on them; and was going to buy thirty thousand more of the government. ‘Here, take one,’ said he. ‘Oh, you needn’t be shy. They are common enough on my estates. I’ll tell you what, though, you could not buy that for less than thirty pounds at any shop in London. Could she, my little duck? Never mind, it is no brighter than her eyes. Now do you know what she will do with that, Master Christie? She will give it to some duffer to put in a pin.’

‘She won’t do nothing of the kind,’ said Emily, flushing all over. ‘She is not such a fool.’ She then volunteered to tell him she had no sweetheart, and did not trouble her head about young men at all. He interpreted this to mean she was looking out for one. So do I.

‘No sweetheart!’ said he; ‘and the prettiest girl I have seen since I landed: then I put in for the situation.’

Here, seeing the footman coming, he bestowed a most paternal kiss on little Christie, and saying, ‘Not a word to John, or no more diamonds from me;’ he moved carefully away, leaving the girl all in a flutter with extravagant hopes.

The next moment this wolf in the sheepfold entered the drawing-room. Mrs. Staines was not there. He waited, and waited, and began to get rather uneasy, as men will who walk among pitfalls.

Presently the footman came to say that Mrs. Staines was with her father, in his study, but

she would come to him in five minutes.

This increased his anxiety. What! She was taking advice of an older head. He began to be very seriously alarmed, and indeed had pretty well made up his mind to go down and gallop off, when the door opened, and Rosa came hastily in. Her eyes were very red with weeping. She came to him with both hands extended to him; he gave her his, timidly. She pressed them with such earnestness and power as he could not have suspected; and thanked him, and blessed him, with such a torrent of eloquence, that he hung his head with shame; and being unable to face it out, villain as he was, yet still artful to the core, he pretended to burst out crying, and ran out of the room, and rode away.

He waited two days, and then called again. Rosa reproached him sweetly for going before she had half thanked him.

‘All the better,’ said he. ‘I have been thanked a great deal too much already. Who would not do his best for a dying countryman, and fight night and day to save him for his wife and child at home? If I had succeeded, then I would be greedy of praise: but now it makes me blush; it makes me very sad.’

‘You did your best,’ said Rosa, tearfully.

‘Ah! that I did. Indeed I was ill for weeks after, myself, through the strain upon my mind, and the disappointment, and going so many nights without sleep. But don’t let us talk of that.’

‘Do you know what my darling says to me in my letter?’

‘No.’

‘Would you like to see it?’

‘Indeed I should: but I have no right.’

‘Every right. It is the only

mark of esteem, worth anything, I can show you.'

She handed him the letter, and buried her own face in her hands.

He read it, and acted the deepest emotion.

He handed it back, without a word.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

From this time Falcon was always welcome at Kent Villa. He fascinated everybody in the house. He renewed his acquaintance with Mr. Lusignan, and got asked to stay a week in the house. He showed Rosa and her father the diamonds, and, the truth must be owned, they made Rosa's eyes sparkle for the first time in this eighteen months. He insinuated rather than declared his enormous wealth.

In reply to the old man's eager questions, as the large diamonds lay glittering on the table, and pointed every word, he said that a few of his Hottentots had found these for him; he had made them dig on a diamondiferous part of his estate, just by way of testing the matter; and this was the result, this, and a much larger stone, for which he had received eight thousand pounds from Posno.

'If I was a young man,' said Lusignan, 'I would go out directly, and dig on your estate.'

'I would not let you do anything so paltry,' said 'le menteur.' 'Why, my dear sir, there are no fortunes to be made by grubbing for diamonds; the fortunes are made out of the diamonds, but not in that way. Now I have thirty thousand acres, and am just concluding a bargain for thirty thousand more, on which I happen to know there are diamonds in a sly corner. Well, of my thirty thousand tried acres, a hundred

only are diamondiferous. But I have four thousand thirty-foot claims, leased at ten shillings per month. Count that up.'

'Why, it is twenty-four thousand pounds a year.'

'Excuse me: you must deduct a thousand a year for the expenses of collection. But that is only one phase of the business. I have a large inn upon each of the three great routes from the diamonds to the coast; and these inns are supplied with the produce of my own farms. Mark the effect of the diamonds on property. My sixty thousand acres, which are not diamondiferous, will very soon be worth as much as sixty thousand English acres, say two pounds the acre, per annum. That is under the mark, because in Africa the land is not burdened with poor rates, tithes, and all the other iniquities that crush the English landowner, as I know to my cost. But that is not all, sir. Would you believe it? even after the diamonds were declared, the people out there had so little foresight that they allowed me to buy land all round Port Elizabeth, Natal, and Cape Town, the three ports through which the world gets at the diamonds, and the diamonds get at the world. I have got a girdle of land round those three outlets, bought by the acre; in two years I shall sell it by the yard. Believe me, sir, English fortunes, even the largest, are mere child's play, compared with the colossal wealth a man can accumulate, if he looks beyond these great discoveries to their consequences, and lets others grub for him. But what is the use of it all to me?' said this Bohemian, with a sigh. 'I have no taste for luxuries; no love of display. I have not even charity to dispense on a large scale; for there are no deserving poor out there;

and the poverty that springs from vice, that I never will encourage.'

John heard nearly all this, and took it into the kitchen; and henceforth Adoration was the only word for this prince of men, this rare combination of the Adonis and the Millionaire.

He seldom held such discourses before Rosa; but talked her father into an impression of his boundless wealth; and half reconciled him to Rose's refusal of Lord Tadcaster, since here was an old suitor, who, doubtless, with a little encouragement, would soon come on again.

Under this impression, Mr. Lusignan gave Falcon more than a little encouragement, and, as Rosa did not resist, he became a constant visitor at the villa, and was always there from Saturday to Monday.

He exerted all his art of pleasing, and he succeeded. He was welcome to Rosa, and she made no secret of it.

Emily threw herself in his way, and had many a sly talk with him, while he was pretending to be engaged with young Christie. He flattered her, and made her sweet on him, but was too much in love with Rosa, after his fashion, to flirt seriously with her. He thought he might want her services: so he worked upon her after this fashion; asked her if she would like to keep an inn.

'Wouldn't I just?' said she, frankly.

Then he told her that, if all went to his wish in England, she should be landlady of one of his inns in the Cape Colony. 'And you will get a good husband out there directly,' said he. 'Beauty is a very uncommon thing in those parts. But I shall ask you to marry somebody who can help you in the business—or not to marry at all.'

'I wish I had the inn,' said Emily. 'Husbands are soon got when a girl hasn't her face only to look to.'

'Well, I promise you the inn,' said he, 'and a good outfit of clothes, and money in both pockets, if you will do me a good turn here in England.'

'That I would, sir. But laws, what can a poor girl like me do for a rich gentleman like you?'

'Can you keep a secret, Emily?'

'Nobody better. You try me, sir.'

He looked at her well; saw she was one of those who could keep a secret, if she chose, and he resolved to risk it.

'Emily, my girl,' said he, sadly, 'I am an unhappy man.'

'You, sir! Why you didn't ought to be.'

'I am then. I am in love; and cannot win her.'

Then he told the girl a pretty tender tale, that he had loved Mrs. Staines when she was Miss Lusignan, had thought himself beloved in turn, but was rejected; and now, though she was a widow, he had not the courage to court her, her heart was in the grave. He spoke in such a broken voice that the girl's good-nature fought against her little pique at finding how little he was smitten with *her*, and Falcon soon found means to array her cupidity on the side of her good-nature. He gave her a five-pound note to buy gloves, and promised her a fortune, and she undertook to be secret as the grave, and say certain things adroitly to Mrs. Staines.

Accordingly, this young woman omitted no opportunity of dropping a word in favour of Falcon. For one thing, she said to Mrs. Staines, 'Mr. Falcon must be very fond of children, ma'am. Why, he worships Master Christie.'

'Indeed! I have not observed that.'

'Why no, ma'am. He is rather shy over it; but when he sees us alone, he is sure to come to us, and say, "Let me look at my child, nurse;" and he do seem fit to eat him. Onst he says to me, "This boy is my heir, nurse." What did he mean by that, ma'am?'

'I don't know.'

'Is he any kin to you, ma'am?'

'None whatever. You must have misunderstood him. You should not repeat all that people say.'

'No, ma'am; only I did think it so odd. Poor gentleman, I don't think he is happy, for all his money.'

'He is too good to be unhappy all his life.'

'So I think, ma'am.'

These conversations were always short, for Rosa, though she was too kind and gentle to snub the girl, was also too delicate to give the least encouragement to her gossip.

But Rosa's was a mind that could be worked upon, and these short but repeated eulogies were not altogether without effect.

At last the insidious Falcon, by not making his approaches in a way to alarm her, acquired her friendship as well as her gratitude; and, in short, she got used to him and liked him. Not being bound by any limit of fact whatever, he entertained her, and took her out of herself a little by extemporaneous pictures; he told her all his thrilling adventures by flood and field, not one of which had ever occurred, yet he made them all sound like truth; he invented strange characters, and set them talking; he went after great whales, and harpooned one, which slapped his boat into fragments with one stroke of its tail; then died, and he hung on by the harpoon protruding from

the carcase till a ship came and picked him up. He shot a lion that was carrying off his favourite Hottentot. He encountered another, wounded him with both barrels, was seized, and dragged along the ground, and gave himself up for lost, but kept firing his revolver down the monster's throat till at last he sickened him, and so escaped out of death's maw; he did *not* say how he had fired in the air, and ridden fourteen miles on end, at the bare sight of a lion's cub; but to compensate that one reserve, plunged into a raging torrent and saved a drowning woman by her long hair, which he caught in his teeth; he rode a race on an ostrich against a friend on a zebra which went faster, but threw his rider and screamed with rage at not being able to eat him; he, Falcon, having declined to run, unless his friend's zebra was muzzled. He fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and shot a wild elephant in the eye; and all this he enlivened with pictorial descriptions of no mean beauty, and as like South Africa as if it had been feu George Robins advertising that Continent for sale.

In short, never was there a more voluble and interesting liar by word of mouth, and never was there a more agreeable creature interposed between a bereaved widow and her daily grief and regrets. He took her a little out of herself, and did her good.

At last, such was the charm of infinite lying, she missed him on the days he did not come, and was brighter when he did come and lie.

Things went smoothly, and so pleasantly, that he would gladly have prolonged this form of courtship for a month or two longer, sooner than risk a premature declaration. But more than one cause drove him to a bolder course;

his passion, which increased in violence by contact with its beautiful object, and also a great uneasiness he felt at not hearing from Phoebe. This silence was ominous. He and she knew each other, and what the other was capable of. He knew she was the woman to cross the seas after him, if Staines left the diggings and any explanation took place that might point to his whereabouts.

These double causes precipitated matters, and at last he began to throw more devotion into his manner; and, having so prepared her for a few days, he took his opportunity and said, one day, 'We are both unhappy. Give me the right to console you.'

She coloured high, and said, 'You have consoled me more than all the world. But there is a limit; always will be.'

One less adroit would have brought her to the point; but this artist only sighed, and let the arrow rankle. By this means he out-fenced her; for now she had listened to a declaration and not stopped it short.

He played melancholy for a day or two, and then he tried her another way. He said, 'I promised your dying husband to be your protector, and a father to his child. I see but one way to keep my word, and that gives me courage to speak—without that I never could. Rosa, I loved you years ago, I am unmarried for your sake. Let me be your husband, and a father to your child.'

Rosa shook her head. 'I could not marry again. I esteem you, I am very grateful to you: and I know I behaved ill to you before. If I could marry again, it would be you. But I cannot. Oh never, never.'

'Then we are both to be unhappy all our days.'

'I shall, as I ought to be. You

will not, I hope. I shall miss you sadly; but, for all that, I advise you to leave me. You will carry my everlasting gratitude, go where you will; that and my esteem are all I have to give.'

'I will go,' said he; 'and I hope he who is gone will forgive my want of courage.'

'He who is gone took my promise never to marry again.'

'Dying men see clearer. I am sure he wished—no matter. It is too delicate.' He kissed her hand and went out, a picture of dejection.

Mrs. Staines shed a tear for him.

Nothing was heard of him for several days; and Rosa pitied him more and more, and felt a certain discontent with herself, and doubt whether she had done right.

Matters were in this state, when one morning Emily came screaming in from the garden, 'The child!—Master Christie!—Where is he?—Where is he?'

The house was alarmed. The garden searched, the adjoining paddock. The child was gone.

Emily was examined, and owned, with many sobs and hysterical cries, that she had put him down in the summer-house for a minute, while she went to ask the gardener for some balm, balm tea being a favourite drink of hers. 'But there was nobody near that I saw,' she sobbed.

Further inquiry proved, however, that a tall gipsy woman had been seen prowling about that morning; and suspicion instantly fastened on her. Servants were sent out right and left; but nothing discovered; and the agonised mother, terrified out of her wits, had Falcon telegraphed to immediately.

He came galloping down that very evening, and heard the story. He galloped into Gravesend, and

after seeing the police, sent word out he should advertise. He placarded Gravesend with rewards, and a reward of a thousand pounds, the child to be brought to him, and no questions asked.

Meantime the police and many of the neighbouring gentry came about the miserable mother with their vague ideas.

Down comes Falcon again next day; tells what he has done, and treats them all with contempt. 'Don't you be afraid, Mrs. Staines,' said he. 'You will get him back. I have taken the sure way. This sort of rogues dare not go near the police, and the police can't find them. You have no enemies; it is only some woman that has fancied a beautiful child. Well, she can have them by the score, for a thousand pounds.'

He was the only one with a real idea: the woman saw it, and clung to him. He left late at night.

Next morning out came the advertisements, and he sent her a handful by special messenger. His zeal and activity kept her bereaved heart from utter despair.

At eleven that night came a telegraph:—

'I have got him. Coming down by special train.'

Then what a burst of joy and gratitude! The very walls of the house seemed to ring with it as a harp rings with music. A special train, too! he would not let the mother yearn all night.

At one in the morning, he drove up with the child and a hired nurse.

Imagine the scene! The mother's screams of joy, her furious kisses, her cooing, her tears, and all the miracles of nature at such a time. The servants all mingled with their employers in the general

rapture, and Emily, who was pale as death, cried and sobbed, and said, 'Oh, ma'am, I'll never let him out of my sight again, no, not for one minute.' Falcon made her a signal, and went out. She met him in the garden.

She was much agitated, and cried, 'Oh, you did well to bring him to-day. I could not have kept it another hour. I'm a wretch!'

'You are a good kind girl; and here's the fifty pounds I promised you.'

'Well, and I have earned it.'

'Of course you have. Meet me in the garden to-morrow morning, and I'll show you you have done a kind thing to your mistress, as well as me. And, as for the fifty pounds, that is *nothing*; do you hear? it is nothing at all, compared with what I will do for you, if you will be true to me, and hold your tongue.'

'Oh! as for that, my tongue shan't betray you, nor shame me. You are a gentleman, and I do think you love her, or I would not help you.'

So she salved her nursemaid's conscience—with the help of the fifty pounds.

The mother was left to her rapture that night. In the morning Falcon told his tale.

'At two P.M. a man had called on him, and had produced one of his advertisements, and had asked him if that was all square—no bobbies on the lurk. "All square, my fine fellow." "Well," said he, "I suppose you are a gentleman." "I am of that opinion too." "Well, sir," says he, "I know a party as has *found* a young gent as comes werry nigh your advertisement." "It will be a very lucky find to that party," I said, "if he is on the square." "Oh, we are always on the square, when the blunt is put down." "The blunt for the child, when you like,

and where you like," said I. " You are the right sort," said he. " I am," replied I. " Will you come and see if it is all right?" said he. " In a minute," said I. Stepped into my bedroom, and loaded my six-shooter.

" What is that?" said Lusignan.

" A revolver with six barrels: by-the-by, the very same I killed the lion with. Ugh! I never think of that scene, without feeling a little quiver; and my nerves are pretty good, too. Well, he took me into an awful part of the town, down a filthy close, into some boozing ken—I beg pardon, some thieves' public-house.'

" Oh, my dear friend," said Rosa, " were you not frightened?"

" Shall I tell you the truth, or play the hero? I think I'll tell you the truth. I felt a little frightened, lest they should get my money and my life, without my getting my godson: that is what I call him now. Well, two ugly dogs came in, and said, " Let us see the flimsies, before you see the kid."

" That is rather sharp practice, I think," said I; " however, here's the swag, and here's the watch-dog." So I put down the notes, and my hand over them with my revolver cocked, and ready to fire.

" Yes, yes," said Rosa, pantingly. " Ah, you were a match for them."

" Well, Mrs. Staines, if I was writing you a novel, I suppose I should tell you the rogues recoiled; but the truth is they only laughed, and were quite pleased. " Swell's in earnest," said one. " Jem, show the kid." Jem whistled, and in came a great tall black gipsy woman, with the darling. My heart was in my mouth, but I would not let them see it. I said, " It is all right. Take half the notes here, and half at the door." They agreed, and then I did it quick, walked to the door, took

the child, gave them the odd notes, and made off as fast as I could: hired a nurse at the hospital—and the rest you know."

" Papa," said Rosa, with enthusiasm, " there is but one man in England who would have got me back my child; and this is he."

When they were alone, Falcon told her she had said words that had gladdened his very heart. " You admit I can carry out one half of his wishes?" said he.

Mrs. Staines said " Yes;" then coloured high: then, to turn it off, said, " But I cannot allow you to lose that large sum of money. You must let me repay you."

" Large sum of money!" said he. " It is no more to me than sixpence to most people. I don't know what to do with my money; and I never shall know, unless you will make a sacrifice of your own feelings, to the wishes of the dead. Oh, Mrs. Staines—Rosa, do pray consider that a man of that wisdom sees the future, and gives wise advice. Sure am I that, if you could overcome your natural repugnance to a second marriage, it would be the best thing for your little boy—I love him already as if he were my own—and, in time, would bring you peace, and comfort, and some day, years hence, even happiness. You are my only love: yet I should never have come to you again, if he had not sent me. Do consider how strange it all is, and what it points to, and don't let me have the misery of losing you again, when you can do no better now, alas, than reward my fidelity."

She was much moved at this artful appeal, and said, " If I was sure I was obeying his will. But how can I feel that, when we both promised never to wed again?"

" A man's dying words are more sacred than any other. You have his letter."

'Yes, but he does not say "marry again."

'That is what he meant, though.'

'How can you say that? How can you know?'

'Because I put the words he said to me together with that short line to you. Mind, I don't say that he did not exaggerate my poor merits; on the contrary, I think he did. But I declare to you that he did hope I should take charge of you and your child. Right or wrong, it was his wish: so pray do not deceive yourself on that point.'

This made more impression on her than anything else he could say, and she said, 'I promise you one thing: I will never marry any man but you.'

Instead of pressing her further, as an inferior artist would, he broke into raptures, kissed her hand tenderly, and was in such high spirits, and so volatile all day, that she smiled sweetly on him, and thought to herself, 'Poor soul! how happy I could make him with a word!'

As he was always watching her face—a practice he carried further than any male person living—he divined that sentiment, and wrought upon it so, that at last he tormented her into saying she would marry him *some day*.

When he had brought her to that, he raged inwardly, to think he had not two years to work in: for it was evident she would marry him in time. But no, it had taken him more than four months, close siege, to bring her to that. No word from Phoebe. An ominous dread hung over his own soul. His wife would be upon him, or, worse still, her brother Dick, who, he knew, would beat him to a mummy on the spot; or, worst of all, the husband of Rosa Staines, who would kill him, or fling him

into a prison. He must make a push.

In this emergency he used his ally, Mr. Lusignan; he told him Mrs. Staines had promised to marry him, but at some distant date. This would not do: he must look after his enormous interests in the colony, and he was so much in love, he could not leave her.

The old gentleman was desperately fond of Falcon, and bent on the match, and he actually consented to give his daughter, what Falcon called, a little push.

The little push was a very great one, I think.

It consisted in directing the clergyman to call in church the banns of marriage between Reginald Falcon and Rosa Staines.

They were both in church together when this was done. Rosa all but screamed, and then turned red as fire, and white as a ghost, by turns. She never stood up again all the service; and, in going home, refused Falcon's arm, and walked swiftly home by herself. Not that she had the slightest intention of passing this monstrous thing by in silence. On the contrary, her wrath was boiling over, and so hot that she knew she should make a scene in the street, if she said a word there.

Once inside the house, she turned on Falcon, with a white cheek and a flashing eye, and said, 'Follow me, sir, if you please.' She led the way to her father's study. 'Papa,' said she, 'I throw myself on your protection. Mr. Falcon has affronted me.'

'Oh, Rosa!' cried Falcon, affecting utter dismay.

'Publicly—publicly: he has had the banns of marriage cried in the church, without my permission.'

'Don't raise your voice so loud, child. All the house will hear you.'

'I choose all the house to hear

me. I will not endure it. I will never marry you now—never.'

'Rosa, my child,' said Lusignan, 'you need not scold poor Falcon, for I am the culprit. It was I who ordered the banns to be cried.'

'Oh! papa, you had no right to do such a thing as that.'

'I think I had. I exercised parental authority for once, and for your good, and for the good of a true and faithful lover of yours, whom you jilted once, and now you trifl with his affection and his interests. He loves you too well to leave you; yet you know his vast estates and interests require his supervision.'

'That for his vast estates!' said Rosa, contemptuously. 'I am not to be driven to the altar like this, when my heart is in the grave. Don't you do it again, papa, or I'll get up and forbid the banns; affront for affront.'

'I should like to see that,' said the old gentleman, drily.

Rosa vouchsafed no reply, but swept out of the room, with burning cheeks and glittering eyes, and was not seen all day, would not dine with them, in spite of three humble deprecating notes Falcon sent her.

'Let the spiteful cat alone,' said old Lusignan. 'You and I will dine together in peace and quiet.'

It was a dull dinner; but Falcon took advantage of the opportunity, impregnated the father with his views, and got him to promise to have the banns cried next Sunday. He consented.

Rosa learned next Sunday morning that this was to be done, and her courage failed her. She did not go to church at all.

She cried a great deal, and submitted to violence, as your true women are too apt to do. They had compromised her, and so conquered her. The permanent feel-

ings of gratitude and esteem caused a reaction after her passion, and she gave up open resistance as hopeless.

Falcon renewed his visits, and was received with the mere sullen languor of a woman who has given in.

The banns were cried a third time.

Then the patient Rosa bought laudanum enough to reunite her to her Christopher, in spite of them all; and, having provided herself with this resource, became more cheerful, and even kind and caressing.

She declined to name the day at present, and that was awkward. Nevertheless the conspirators felt sure they should tire her out into doing that, before long; for they saw their way clear, and she was perplexed in the extreme.

In her perplexity, she used to talk to a certain beautiful star she called her Christopher. She loved to fancy he was now an inhabitant of that bright star; and often on a clear night she would look up, and beg for guidance from this star. This I consider foolish: but then I am old and sceptical; she was still young and innocent, and sorely puzzled to know her husband's real will.

I don't suppose the star had anything to do with it, except as a focus of her thoughts; but one fine night, after a long inspection of Christopher's star, she dreamed a dream. She thought that a lovely wedding dress hung over a chair, that a crown of diamonds as large as almonds sparkled ready for her on the dressing-table, and she was undoing her black gown, and about to take it off, when suddenly the diamonds began to pale, and the white satin dress to melt away, and in its place there rose a pale face and a long beard, and Christopher Staines stood before her,

and said quietly, 'Is this how you keep your vow?' Then he sank slowly, and the white dress was black, and the diamonds were jet; and she awoke, with his gentle words of remonstrance, and his very tones ringing in her ear.

This dream, co-operating with her previous agitation and misgivings, shook her very much; she did not come downstairs till near dinner-time; and both her father, and Falcon, who came as a matter of course to spend his Sunday, were struck with her appearance. She was pale, gloomy, morose, and had an air of desperation about her.

Falcon would not see it; he knew that it is safest to let her sex alone, when they look like that; and then the storm sometimes subsides of itself.

After dinner, Rosa retired early; and soon she was heard walking rapidly up and down the dressing-room.

This was quite unusual, and made a noise.

Papa Lusignan thought it inconsiderate; and, after a while, remarking, gently, that he was not particularly fond of noise, he proposed they should smoke the pipe of peace on the lawn.

They did so; but after a while, finding that Falcon was not smoking, he said, 'Don't let me detain you. Rosa is alone.'

Falcon took the hint, and went to the drawing-room. Rosa met him on the stairs, with a scarf over her shoulders. 'I must speak to papa,' said she. 'Where is he?'

'He is on the lawn, dear Rosa,' said Falcon, in his most dulcet tones. He was sure of his ally, and very glad to use him as a buffer to receive the first shock.

So he went into the drawing-room, where all the lights were burning, and quietly took up a book. But he did not read a line;

he was too occupied in trying to read his own future.

The mean villain, who is incapable of remorse, is, of all men, most capable of fear. His villainy had, to all appearance, reached the goal; for he felt sure that all Rosa's struggles would, sooner or later, succumb to her sense of gratitude and his strong will and patient temper. But, when the victory was won, what a life! He must fly with her to some foreign country, pursued from pillar to post by an enraged husband, and by the offended law. And, if he escaped the vindictive foe a year or two, how could he escape that other enemy he knew, and dreaded—poverty? He foresaw he should come to hate the woman he was about to wrong, and she would instantly revenge herself, by making him an exile and, soon or late, a prisoner, or a pauper.

While these misgivings battled with his base, but ardent passion, strange things were going on out of doors—but they will be best related in another sequence of events, to which, indeed, they fairly belong.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Staines and Mrs. Falcon landed at Plymouth, and went up to town by the same train. They parted in London, Staines to go down to Gravesend, Mrs. Falcon to visit her husband's old haunts, and see if she could find him.

She did not find him; but she heard of him, and learned that he always went down to Gravesend from Saturday till Monday.

Notwithstanding all she had said to Staines, the actual information startled her, and gave her a turn. She was obliged to sit down, for her knees seemed to give way. It was but a momentary weakness.

She was now a wife and a mother, and had her rights. She said to herself, 'My rogue has turned that poor woman's head long before this, no doubt. But I shall go down and just bring him away by the ear.'

For once her bitter indignation overpowered every other sentiment, and she lost no time, but, late as it was, went down to Gravesend, ordered a private sitting-room and bedroom for the night, and took a fly to Kent Villa.

But Christopher Staines had the start of her. He had already gone down to Gravesend with his carpet bag, left it at the inn, and walked to Kent Villa that lovely summer night, the happiest husband in England.

His heart had never for one instant been disturbed by Mrs. Falcon's monstrous suspicion; he looked on her as a monomaniac; a sensible woman insane on one point, her husband.

When he reached the villa, however, he thought it prudent to make sure that Falcon had come to England at all, and discharged his commission. He would not run the risk, small as he thought it, of pouncing unexpected on his Rosa, being taken for a ghost, and terrifying her, or exciting her to madness.

Now the premises of Kent Villa were admirably adapted to what they call in war a reconnaissance. The lawn was studded with laurentius and other shrubs that had grown magnificently in that Kentish air.

Staines had no sooner set his foot on the lawn, than he heard voices: he crept towards them from bush to bush; and, standing in impenetrable shade, he saw in the clear moonlight two figures—Mr. Lusignan and Reginald Falcon.

These two dropped out only a word or two at intervals; but what

they did say struck Staines as odd. For one thing, Lusignan remarked, 'I suppose you will want to go back to the Cape. Such enormous estates as yours will want looking after.'

'Enormous estates!' said Staines to himself. 'Then they must have grown very fast in a few months.'

'Oh yes!' said Falcon; 'but I think of showing her a little of Europe first.'

Staines thought this still more mysterious; he waited to hear more, but the succeeding remarks were of an ordinary kind.

He noticed, however, that Falcon spoke of his wife by her Christian name, and that neither party mentioned Christopher Staines. He seemed quite out of their little world.

He began to feel a strange chill creep down him.

Presently Falcon went off to join Rosa; and Staines thought it was quite time to ask the old gentleman whether Falcon had executed his commission, or not.

He was only hesitating how to do it, not liking to pounce in the dark on a man who abhorred everything like excitement, when Rosa herself came flying out in great agitation.

Oh! the thrill he felt at the sight of her! With all his self-possession, he would have sprung forward and taken her in his arms with a mighty cry of love, if she had not immediately spoken words that rooted him to the spot with horror. But she came with the words in her very mouth: 'Papa, I am come to tell you I cannot, and will not marry Mr. Falcon.'

'Oh yes, you will, my dear.'

'Never! I'll die sooner. Not that you will care for that. I tell you, I saw my Christopher last night—in a dream. He had a beard; but I saw him, oh so plain: and he said, "Is this the

way you keep your promise?" That is enough for me. I have prayed, again and again, to his star, for light. I am so perplexed and harassed by you all, and you make me believe what you like. Well, I have had a revelation. It is not my poor lost darling's wish I should wed again. I don't believe Mr. Falcon any more. I hear nothing but lies by day. The truth comes to my bed-side at night. I will not marry this man.'

'Consider, Rosa, your credit is pledged. You must not be always jilting him heartlessly. Dreams! nonsense. There—I love peace. It is no use your storming at me; rave to the moon and the stars, if you like, and when you have done, do pray come in, and behave like a rational woman, who has pledged her faith to an honourable man, and a man of vast estates—a man that nursed your husband in his last illness, found your child, at a great expense, when you had lost him, and merits eternal gratitude, not eternal jilting. I have no patience with you.'

The old gentleman retired in high dudgeon.

Staines stood in the black shade of his cedar-tree, rooted to the ground by this revelation of male villainy and female credulity.

He did not know what on earth to do. He wanted to kill Falcon, but not to terrify his own wife to death. It was now too clear she thought he was dead.

Rosa watched her father's retiring figure out of sight. 'Very well,' said she, clenching her teeth; then suddenly she turned, and looked up to heaven. 'Do you hear?' said she, 'my Christie's star? I am a poor perplexed creature. I asked you for a sign: and that very night I saw him in a dream. Why should I marry, out of gratitude? Why should I

marry one man, when I love another? What does it matter his being dead? I love him too well to be wife to any living man. They persuade me, they coax me, they pull me, they push me. I see they will make me. But I will outwit them. See—see!' and she held up a little phial in the moonlight. 'This shall cut the knot for me: this shall keep me true to my Christie, and save me from breaking promises I ought never to have made. This shall unite me once more with him I killed, and loved.'

She meant she would kill herself the night before the wedding, which perhaps she would not, and perhaps she would. Who can tell? The weak are violent. But Christopher, seeing the poison so near her lips, was perplexed, took two strides, wrenched it out of her hand, with a snarl of rage, and instantly plunged into the shade again.

Rosa uttered a shriek, and flew into the house.

The farther she got, the more terrified she became, and soon Christopher heard her screaming in the drawing-room in an alarming way. They were like the screams of the insane.

He got terribly anxious, and followed her. All the doors were open.

As he went upstairs, he heard her cry, 'His ghost! his ghost! I have seen his ghost! No, no. I feel his hand upon my arm now. A beard! and so he had in the dream. He is alive. My darling is alive. You have deceived me. You are an impostor—a villain. Out of the house this moment, or he shall kill you.'

'Are you mad?' cried Falcon. 'How can he be alive, when I saw him dead?'

This was too much. Staines gave the door a blow with his arm,

and strode into the apartment, looking white and tremendous.

Falcon saw death in his face; gave a shriek, drew his revolver, and fired at him with as little aim as he had at the lioness; then made for the open window. Staines seized a chair, followed him and hurled it at him, and the chair and the man went through the window together, and then there was a strange thud heard outside.

Rosa gave a loud scream, and swooned away.

Staines laid his wife flat on the floor, got the women about her, and at last she began to give the usual signs of returning life.

Staines said, to the oldest woman there, 'If she sees me, she will go off again. Carry her to her room; and tell her, by degrees, that I am alive.'

All this time Papa Lusignan had sat trembling and whimpering in a chair, moaning, 'This is a painful scene—very painful.' But at last an idea struck him—'WHY YOU HAVE ROBBED THE OFFICE!'

Scarcely was Mrs. Staines out of the room, when a fly drove up, and this was immediately followed by violent and continuous screaming close under the window.

'Oh dear!' sighed Papa Lusignan.

They ran down, and found Falcon impaled at full length on the spikes of the villa, and Phoebe screaming over him, and trying in vain to lift him off them. He had struggled a little, in silent terror, but had then fainted from fear and loss of blood, and, lying rather inside the rails, which were high, he could not be extricated from the outside.

As soon as his miserable condition was discovered, the servants ran down into the kitchen, and so up to the rails by the area steps. These rails had caught him; one had gone clean through his arm,

the other had penetrated the fleshy part of the thigh, and a third pierced his ear.

They got him off; but he was insensible, and the place drenched with his blood.

Phoebe clutched Staines by the arm. 'Let me know the worst,' said she. 'Is he dead?'

Staines examined him, and said, 'No.'

'Can you save him?'

'I?'

'Yes. Who can, if you cannot? Oh, have mercy on me!' and she went on her knees to him, and put her forehead on his knees.

He was touched by her simple faith; and the noble traditions of his profession aided with his gratitude to this injured woman. 'Mrs. Falcon,' said he, 'I will do my best, for your sake.'

He took immediate steps for stanching the blood: and the fly carried Phoebe and her villain to the inn at Gravesend.

Falcon came to on the road; but, finding himself alone with Phoebe, shamed unconsciousness of everything but pain.

Staines, being thoroughly enraged with Rosa, yet remembering his solemn vow never to abuse her again, saw her father, and told him to tell her he should think over her conduct quietly, not wishing to be harder upon her than she deserved.

Rosa, who had been screaming, and crying for joy, ever since she came to her senses, was not so much afflicted at this message as one might have expected. He was alive, and all things else were trifles.

Nevertheless, when day after day went by, and not even a line from Christopher, she began to fear he would cast her off entirely; the more so as she heard he was now and then at Gravesend to visit Mrs. Falcon at the inn.

While matters were thus, Uncle Philip burst on her like a bomb. ‘He is alive! he is alive! he is alive!’ And they had a cuddle over it.

‘Oh, Uncle Philip! Have you seen him?’

‘Seen him? Yes. He caught me on the hop, just as I came in from Italy. I took him for a ghost.’

‘Oh, weren’t you frightened?’

‘Not a bit. I don’t mind ghosts. I’d have half a dozen to dinner every day, if I might choose ‘em. I couldn’t stand stupid ones. But I say, his temper isn’t improved by all this dying: he is in an awful rage with you; and what for?’

‘Oh, uncle, what for? Because I’m the vilest of women!’

‘Vilest of fiddlesticks! It’s his fault, not yours. Shouldn’t have died. It’s always a dangerous experiment.’

‘I shall die if he will not forgive me. He keeps away from me, and from his child.’

‘I’ll tell you. He heard, in Gravesend, your banns had been cried: that has moved the peevish fellow’s bile.’

‘It was done without my consent. Papa will tell you so: and oh, uncle, if you knew the arts, the forged letter in my darling’s hand, the way he wrought on me. Oh, villain! villain! Uncle, forgive your poor silly niece, that the world is too wicked and too clever for her to live in.’

‘Because you are too good and innocent,’ said Uncle Philip. ‘There, don’t you be downhearted. I’ll soon bring you two together again: a couple of ninnies. I’ll tell you what is the first thing. You must come and live with me. Come at once, bag and baggage. He won’t show here, the sulky brute.’

Philip Staines had a large house

in Cavendish Square, a crusty old patient, like himself, had left him. It was his humour to live in a corner of this mansion, though the whole was capitally furnished by his judicious purchases at auctions.

He gave Rosa, and her boy, and his nurse, the entire first floor, and told her she was there for life. ‘Look here,’ said he, ‘this last affair has opened my eyes. Such women as you are the sweeteners of existence. You leave my roof no more. Your husband will make the same discovery. Let him run about and be miserable a bit. He will have to come to book.’

She shook her head sadly.

‘My Christopher will never say a harsh word to me. All the worse for me. He will quietly abandon a creature so inferior to him.’

‘Stuff!’

Now she was always running to the window, in hope that Christopher would call on his uncle, and that she might see him; and one day she gave a scream so eloquent, Philip knew what it meant. ‘Get you behind that screen, you and your boy,’ said he, ‘and be as still as mice. Stop—give me that letter the scoundrel forged, and the ring.’

This was hardly done, and Rosa out of sight, and trembling from head to foot, when Christopher was announced. Philip received him very affectionately, but wasted no time. ‘Been to Kent Villa yet?’

‘No,’ was the grim reply.

‘Why not?’

‘Because I have sworn never to say an angry word to her again; and, if I was to go there, I should say a good many angry ones. Oh! when I think that her folly drove me to sea, to do my best for her, and that I was nearer death for that woman than ever man was, and lost my reason, for her, and went through toil, privations,

hunger, exile, mainly for her, and then to find the banns cried in open church, with that scoundrel —say no more, uncle. I shall never reproach her, and never forgive her.'

' She was deceived.'

' I don't doubt that; but nobody has a right to be so great a fool as all that.'

' It was not her folly, but her innocence that was imposed on. You a philosopher, and not know that wisdom itself is sometimes imposed on and deceived by cunning folly! Have you forgotten your Milton?—

" At Wisdom's gate Suspicion sleeps,
And deems no ill where no ill seems."

Come, come; are you sure you are not a little to blame? Did you write home the moment you found you were not dead?

Christopher coloured high.

' Evidently not,' said the keen old man. ' Aha! my fine fellow, have I found the flaw in your own armour?'

' I did wrong, but it was for her. I sinned—for her. I could not bear her to be without money; and I knew the insurance—I sinned for her. She has sinned against me.'

' And she had much better have sinned against God—hadn't she? He is more forgiving than we perfect creatures, that cheat insurance companies. And so, my fine fellow, you hid the truth from her for two or three months.'

No answer.

' Strike off those two or three months; would the banns have ever been cried?'

' Well, uncle,' said Christopher, hard pressed, ' I am glad she has got a champion; and I hope you will always keep your eye on her.'

' I mean to.'

' Good morning.'

' No; don't be in a hurry. I

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have something else to say, not so provoking. Do you know the arts by which she was made to believe you wished her to marry again?'

' I wished her to marry again! Are you mad, uncle?'

' Whose handwriting is on this envelope?'

' Mine, to be sure.'

' Now read the letter.'

Christopher read the forged letter.

' Oh, monstrous!'

' This was given her with your ruby ring, and a tale so artful that nothing we read about the devil comes near it. This was what did it. The Earl of Tadcaster brought her title, and wealth, and love.'

' What, he too! The little cub I saved, and lost myself for—blank him! blank him!'

' Why, you stupid ninny; you forgot you were dead; and he could not help loving her: how could he? Well, but you see she refused him; and why? because he came without a forged letter from *you*. Do you doubt her love for you?'

' Of course I do. She never loved me as I loved her.'

' Christopher, don't you say that before me, or you and I shall quarrel. Poor girl! she lay, in my sight, as near death for you as you were for her. I'll show you something.'

He went to a cabinet, and took out a silver paper; he unpinned it, and laid Rosa's beautiful black hair upon her husband's knees. ' Look at that, you hard-hearted brute!' he roared to Christopher, who sat, anything but hard-hearted, his eyes filling fast, at the sad proof of his wife's love and suffering.

Rosa could bear no more. She came out with her boy in her hand. ' Oh, uncle, do not speak harshly to him, or you will kill me quite.'

She came across the room, a picture of timidity and penitence, with her whole eloquent body bent forward at an angle. She kneeled at his knees, with streaming eyes, and held her boy up to him : 'Plead for your poor mother, my darling ; she mourns her fault, and will never excuse it.'

The cause was soon decided. All Philip's logic was nothing, compared with mighty nature. Christopher gave one great sob, and took his darling to his heart, without one word ; and he and Rosa clung together, and cried over each other. Philip slipped out of the room, and left the restored ones together.

I have something more to say about my hero and heroine ; but must first deal with other characters, not wholly uninteresting to the reader, I hope.

Dr. Staines directed Phœbe Falcon how to treat her husband. No medicine, no stimulants ; very wholesome food, in moderation, and the temperature of the body regulated by tepid water. Under these instructions, the injured, but still devoted, wife, was the real healer. He pulled through, but was lame for life, and ridiculously lame, for he went with a spring halt, a sort of hop and go one that made the girls laugh, and vexed Adonis.

Phœbe found the diamonds, and offered them all to Staines, in expiation of his villainy. 'See,' she said, 'he has only spent one.'

Staines said he was glad of it, for her sake ; for he must be just to his own family. He sold them for three thousand two hundred pounds ; but for the big diamond he got twelve thousand pounds, and I believe it was worth double the money.

Counting the two sums, and de-

ducting six hundred for the stone Mr. Falcon had embezzled, he gave her over seven thousand pounds.

She stared at him, and changed colour at so large a sum. 'But I have no claim on that, sir.'

'That is a good joke,' said he. 'Why you and I are partners in the whole thing—you and I and Dick. Why it was with his horse and rifle I bought the big diamond. Poor, dear, honest, manly Dick. No, the money is honestly yours, Mrs. Falcon ; but don't trust a penny to your husband.'

'He will never see it, sir. I shall take him back, and give him all his heart can ask for, with this ; but he will be little more than a servant in the house now, as long as Dick is single : I know that ; and she could still cry at the humiliation of her villain.

Staines made her promise to write to him ; and she did write him a sweet womanly letter, to say that they were making an enormous fortune, and hoped to end their days in England. Dick sent his kind love, and thanks.

I will add, what she only said by implication, that she was happy after all. She still contrived to love the thing she could not respect. Once, when an officious friend pitied her for her husband's lameness, she said, 'Find me a face like his. The lamer the better ; he can't run after the girls, like some.'

Dr. Staines called on Lady Cicely Treherne ; the footman stared. He left his card.

A week afterwards, she called on him. She had a pink tinge in her cheeks, a general animation, and her face full of brightness and archness.

'Bless me !' said he, bluntly, 'is this you ? How you are improved !'

'Yes,' said she ; 'and I am come

to thank you for your pwesewip tion: I followed it to the lettaa.'

' Woe is me! I have forgotten it.'

' You diwected me to mawwy an ice man.'

' Never: I hate a nice man.'

' No, no—an Iwishman: and I have done it.'

' Good gracious! you don't mean that! I must be more cautious in my prescriptions. After all, it seems to agree.'

' Admiwably.'

' He loves you?'

' To distraction.'

' He amuses you?'

' Fwodigiously. Come and see.'

Dr. and Mrs. Staines live with Uncle Philip. The insurance money is returned, but the diamond money makes them very easy. Staines follows his profession now under great advantages; a noble house, rent free, the curiosity that attaches to a man who has been canted out of a ship in mid-ocean, and lives to tell it; and then Lord Tadcaster, married into another noble house, swears by him, and talks of him; so does Lady Cicely Munster, late Treherne; and when such friends as these are warm, it makes a physician the centre of an important *clien-telle*; but his best friend of all is his unflagging industry, and his truly wonderful diagnosis, which resembles divination. He has the ball at his feet, and above all, that without which wordly success soon palls, a happy home, a fireside warm with sympathy.

Mrs. Staines is an admiring, sympathising wife, and an admirable housekeeper. She still utters inadvertencies now and then, commits new errors at odd times, but never repeats them when exposed. Observing which docility, Uncle Philip has been

heard to express a fear that, in twenty years, she will be the wisest woman in England. 'But, thank heaven!' he adds, 'I shall be gone before that.'

Her conduct and conversation afford this cynic constant food for observation; and he has delivered himself oracularly at various stages of the study: but I cannot say that his observations, taken as a whole, present that consistency which entitles them to be regarded as a body of philosophy. Examples: In the second month after Mrs. Staines came to live with him, he delivered himself thus: 'My niece Rosa is an anomaly. She gives you the impression she is shallow. Mind your eye: in one moment she will take you out of your depth, or any man's depth. She is like those country streams I used to fish for pike when I was young; you go along, seeing the bottom everywhere; but presently you come to a corner, and it is fifteen feet deep all in a moment, and souse you go over head and ears: that's my niece Rosa.'

In six months he had got to this—and, mind you, each successive dogma was delivered in a loud, aggressive tone, and in sublime oblivion of the preceding oracle—' My niece Rosa is the most artful woman. (You may haw! haw! haw! as much as you like. You have not found out her little game—I have.) What is the aim of all women? To be beloved by an unconscionable number of people. Well, she sets up for a simpleton, and so disarms all the brilliant people, and they love her. Everybody loves her. Just you put her down in a room with six clever women, and you will see who is the favourite. She looks as shallow as a pond, and she is as deep as the ocean.'

At the end of the year he threw off the mask altogether. 'The great

sweetener of a man's life,' said he, 'is "a simpleton." I shall not go abroad any more; my house has become attractive: I've got a simpleton. When I have a headache, her eyes fill with tender concern, and she hovers about me and pesters me with pillows: when I am cross with her, she is afraid I am ill. When I die, and leave her a lot of money, she will howl for months, and say, "I don't want his money: I waw-waw-waw-want my Uncle Philip, to love me, and scold me." One day she told me, with a sigh, I hadn't lectured her for a month. "I am afraid I have offended you," says she, "or else worn you out, dear." When I am well, give

me a simpleton, to make me laugh. When I am ill, give me a simpleton, to soothe me with her innocent tenderness. A simpleton shall wipe the dews of death, and close my eyes: and, when I cross the river of death, let me be met by a band of the heavenly host, who were all simpletons here on earth, and too good for such a hole, so now they are in heaven, and their garments always white—because there are no laundresses there.'

Arrived at this point, I advise the Anglo-Saxon race to retire, grinning, to fresh pastures, and leave this champion of 'a Simpleton' to thunder paradoxes in a desert.

THE END.



THE HARZ MOUNTAINS: A TOUR IN THE TOY COUNTRY.

BY HENRY BLACKBURN.



Gretchen, surrounded by babies, knitting and staring with all her eyes. It is a quiet, rather deserted-looking spot, with no attempt at trimness or attractiveness—a poor dilapidated 'Terrasse,' or public walk, with old wooden seats, where Carl and Fritz have carved their names, and hacked about with pocket-knives, and otherwise made themselves disagreeably at home. But it is, nevertheless, the place in Hanover to-day for quiet and rest; a place where babies, strapped in stiff card-board packets, are brought to sleep, lovers to love, and old men to dream.

'Unter den Linden,' as we sit here to-day, let us turn our eyes southward, and scan the blue horizon. As we look we can trace a far-off sea of mountains, low, smooth, and spreading east and west, like a receding tide upon the sands. It is a deep sea—a sea of many mysteries, legends, and dreams—the source of inspiration of Goethe's poetry and Heine's philosophy. 'Unter den Linden,' there come upon the south wind echoes of the *Walpurgisnacht*, and memories of the loves of Marguerite. The spirit-land of Northern Germany is before us. Poets, artists, philosophers, and the children of a thousand German homes have fed their

fancies, and moulded their ideas of life beyond cities, from the little range of mountains which are called the 'Toy Country' of Northern Germany.

We will not dwell on the poetic associations of the Harz at the outset, but rather tell the reader what it is like to-day—what it is that attracts in such numbers the inhabitants of Bremen, Hamburg, Hanover, and Brunswick, and why the traveller on his way from London to Berlin or Vienna would do well to turn aside for a few days and explore a region about which scarcely anything seems to be known. If the tourist refers to his handbook for Northern Germany, he will there be told that it is hardly worth the while of the hunter after the picturesque who has seen other parts of Europe to go far out of his way to explore the Harz, unless he be a geologist, or interested in mining operations, and he will learn that this, the most northerly range of mountains in Germany, is only about sixty miles by thirty in extent, and that its highest peak, the Brocken, is only three thousand feet above the level of the sea. The attractions of the Harz Mountains to the inhabitants of the flat countries, in the burning days of July and August, are greater than the sea-breezes of their coast. The charm of mountaineering, and walking on heather-covered hillsides, and wandering freely in forests of pines, is greater and more alluring than the casinos on the seashore. Thus it is that the capitalists of the northern towns of Germany, especially Bremen, are popularising the principal valleys in the Harz, con-

structing railways and hotels, and turning little villages into prosperous summer towns. The crowded inhabitants of the old streets of Bremen and Leipsic, where children live like caged birds for nine months in the year, fly with natural instinct to trees and woods, to freedom and fresh air, to see in real life the little red and white houses, the stiff pine-trees, the flat-sided sheep, the spotted cows, the herdsmen in brown and green 'Noah's ark' coats, and the formal procession of pigs, goats, and sheep that they had played with in babyhood. The process is now made easy enough for all classes. A 'through' ticket can be taken from Bremen to Harzburg, and the journey is accomplished in about six hours.

What there is to see in the Harz Mountains, and how the holiday-makers beguile their summer days, the tourist may see for himself in less than a week, by following the route indicated in this narrative.

Leaving Hanover, with its dirty streets and sunburned walls, with its old palaces covered with Prussian *affiches*, we take the railway to

The railway station and its surroundings are so modern and prosaic, and the shrieking of the engines so incessant, that we might fancy ourselves at Lyons or Manchester, were it not for the carriages, which are still stamped with a royal crown, and for the unmistakably German faces in the crowd.

From Hanover we pass eastward to old-fashioned Brunswick, and, with a glimpse of its old gables and streets, we are soon again in the open country, winding through cornfields, past formal little villages with houses of the familiar toy pattern, and little wooden children standing bare-headed in the sun. We spend several hours unnecessarily at wayside stations, while the conductors of the express train consume innumerable flagons of beer, and sit down to smoke with the station-masters in a midday dream.

One of these long delays is at the little station of Vienenburg, a junction between two lines of railway, one to Harzburg, the other to Goslar. In about an hour after leaving Vienenburg we find ourselves gradually ascending the mountain slopes that hide the city from our view. A glance backward toward the plains, and we can discern the distant cities of Brunswick and Hanover glistening in the sunlight: a glance forward and upward, and we find ourselves winding round and under the walls of a great city. There are watch-towers above our heads, and the 'cutting' through which the train passes is in reality the old castle moat. The distance we have come from Brunswick by the mail-train is twenty-seven miles, and the time occupied on the journey has been four hours. But the transition is rapid enough, and the contrast between the old and the new is both sudden and striking. On one side, as we approach this old im-



A GLIMPSE OF HANOVER.

Brunswick, and so on southward to Goslar, in the Harz Mountains.

perial city, are the watch-towers, where warriors with bows and arrows stood guard over its treasures eight hundred years ago; on the other side the railway signal-man of 1873.

But Goslar—this strange old town set on the slopes of beautiful hills—whoever heard of it before, excepting as 'the head-quarters of a mining district—bleak, dull, and uninteresting'? Have we not made a discovery here of a new world of interest? What is its history—to compass in a few words eight centuries of time? A city rich, flourishing, and powerful, with imperial rights and dignities, once the residence of emperors and the seat of the German Diet; the source of almost unbounded wealth in its gold and silver mines, guarded from its watch-towers by trained bands of warriors day and night; a city not only planned and fortified with wonderful knowledge of the science of defence, but set upon a line of hills with such admirable design, that it must have been a delightful place of residence in imperial days. A pause of five hundred years, and the old Romanesque buildings—which are still traceable here and there, such as the *Dom-capelle*, a relic of the imperial Dom erected by Conrad II. in the year 916—are swept away, and a new element of life makes its mark in Goslar: a period of commercial prosperity takes the place of the more romantic and warlike; the arms and insignia of an imperial city are thrust aside, and guilds and corporations erect town-halls, warehouses, and massive, high-gabled beer breweries. The Gothic *Kaiservorwerth* (now turned into an inn), standing in the central square, gives in itself a new character to the city, and bows and arrows give place to more peaceful weapons. A new city is built, so to speak, within the walls of the

old; new customs and new sciences are introduced, manufactures are encouraged, and the art of mining and smelting—the source of wealth, the *raison d'être*, it may be said, of Goslar—is carried to such perfection, that the world and the world's wealth flock hither from all parts of Germany. Schools of mining are established, geological experiments of great scientific importance are carried on, and the little river Gose, which once flowed a wide stream through the town, has its tributaries diverted for mining purposes, and dwindles almost out of sight. Three hundred years more, and the city is asleep. Its population has dwindled away; its mining operations are no longer the world's wonder; its halls are turned into granaries; the walls of its old beer breweries totter and fall; the wooden gables lean; the carved wood-work on its doorways becomes defaced; there is silence in its streets.

'Why is it asleep?' is the natural question; and why should such a grand old city remain untenanted? What is to become of Goslar? Will it, because trade has for the time been diverted into other channels, disappear slowly from the map of Europe, or be once more a populous and thriving city? Forty thousand people living in Goslar in barbaric days, and now only nine thousand! A city dwindling away for want of being known, and thirty thousand people reminded of its existence through the pages of an English magazine, in these modern days of enterprise and railway communication! Let us endeavour to sketch its modern aspect, and the welcome it can give to strangers.

There is no very good inn in the Harz Mountains, but there is plain, and generally clean, German accommodation; there are always ridiculous little beds, and food which

the mountain air renders more than tolerable. Herr Paul, at the inn near the round tower, is an attentive host, who speaks English, and is adapting himself to English habits and customs, as far as he has opportunities of observing them. The *Kaisersworth*, in the market-place, is the principal inn—a picturesque old building of the fifteenth century, adorned exteriorly with statues of former emperors—and there are several others in the town. The streets are roughly paved, and some not too clean; but the old houses, with their carved frontages and high-pitched gables, fringed with ornament, and decorated with grotesque figures, the creepers growing over the closed lattices, the solid brass door-knockers in the likeness of mermaids, satyrs, dolphins, dragons, and griffins, the deep, rich colour of the time-stained wood, and the peeps of the hills at the ends of the streets, lead the visitor on and



OVER THE COBBLE-STONES.

on, over innumerable and wearying cobble-stones.

To see what are called the 'show-places' in the town, the visitor will

probably do best to take a human guide, and give himself up to his care for one day. He will then see in detail what we can only indicate here—the relics of a wonderful tenth-century city. He will be shown the remains of the imperial *Dom*, and what is said to be a votive altar of the early Saxons; and what is more interesting, because more authentic, the walls of the ancient *Kaiserhaus*, erected by the Emperor Henry III. in 1053. Its style is Romanesque, and its proportions and situation make many similar buildings of a later date look mean and poor. It is true that we can repeat the best lines in architecture that are the 'monopoly of past ages,' but we miss almost always the simple grandeur and fitness which are the stamp of ancient work. There are parts of this building, now used as a granary, and piled up with rubbish, which are full of suggestion, and worthy of examination, we venture to think, by any architect who comes this way—such, for instance, as the arrangement of the windows so as to command the best views and the finest air. In the *Rathhaus*, on one side of the market-place, there is an elaborately-wrought silver tankard of the fourteenth century, with figures and implements in high relief, the expressions on the faces of the figures being wonderfully worked on a small scale. In this, and in some specimens of early stained glass, we are again reminded of the 'lost arts,' of which we have lately heard so much. If not 'lost,' these things are certainly fading before our eyes.

The relics in Goslar are not, however, its principal attraction. The visitor will be more struck by the picturesque aspects of its old streets, the variety and grandeur in design of its granaries and dwelling-houses, built of wood

and stone, with dark wooden gables and lattices and massive timbers, sharp in outline and well preserved where the stone and brick foundations are crumbling away. The ornamentations of the exteriors of the houses should not be passed over, nor the patterns in the wood carving in the interiors. Here and there we may see, as in Moorish work, the conventional forms of flowers and plants introduced in ornament in the most natural way. Just above our heads, on the front of a small dwelling-house, the ripe fruit and leaves of the Indian corn are carved in scrolls as a fringe to the gables, and grapes and flowers are modelled on the panels. Artists might settle down in Goslar with a summer's work before them of the rarest kind, for, happily for those who are yet to come, it is still almost unknown.

But ancient Goslar has already a fashionable life of its own, and affects, to some extent, the manners of to-day. It does not attempt to compete with Harzburg or the more modern watering-places of Blankenburg or Wernigerode, but it is a watering-place, and it has its own particular promenade. Let us come this afternoon and see 'life at Goslar,' or, in other words, the 'procession of the sick.' The figures are pilgrims that have come from far and wide to combine the attractions of a holiday with the benefits of a wonderful 'cure' for which the town has long been celebrated. The promenades and walks on the ramparts, lined with trees, are crowded at certain periods of the day with valetudinarians, who are going through a prescribed course of getting up early, taking regular exercise, attending strictly to their diet, and generally undoing what they have been steadily doing since their last visit. The fine air

and regular habits which are strictly enforced have the natural beneficial effect on the majority, but there are some who require stronger measures, and whose regimen consists in drinking daily several pints of a dark mixture having the appearance, taste, and effect of taraxacum or senna. The bottles of this liquid are supplied to the patients at the public gardens and little *cafés*, situated at convenient distances in the suburbs of Goslar. The usual time prescribed by the physician under whose control the gardens are managed is about a fortnight for each patient, who takes two or three bottles a day. It is a serious business with some of them, but they generally put a good face on the matter, so that a stranger to the place would merely regard them as holiday-makers of a rather dilapidated and eccentric type. We have sketched (on the next page) the scene at one of these gardens about four o'clock in the afternoon, when the conviviality is at its height.

Among the antiquities of Goslar we must not omit to speak of the mines. About a mile up the valley, in a southward direction, there is a mine that has been worked for at least *eight centuries*, yielding 'gold and silver, copper, lead, zinc, sulphur, vitriol, and alum.' We repeat the catalogue of minerals as given to strangers who visit the Rammelsberg mine, but at the present time there is little activity, and the yield hardly pays the expense of working.

The situation of Harzburg, the next town on our route, at the head of a little valley, closed in on either side by woods, will remind the traveller of the watering-places of the Pyrenees. It is in a *cul-de-sac*, from which there is no easy escape, except by returning northward into the plains. As we drive



DRINKING THE WATERS AT GOSLAR.

up the valley, past the railway terminus, we pass a long line of scattered cottages of the peasants before reaching the new and fashionable Harzburg, the growth of the last few years. The road is



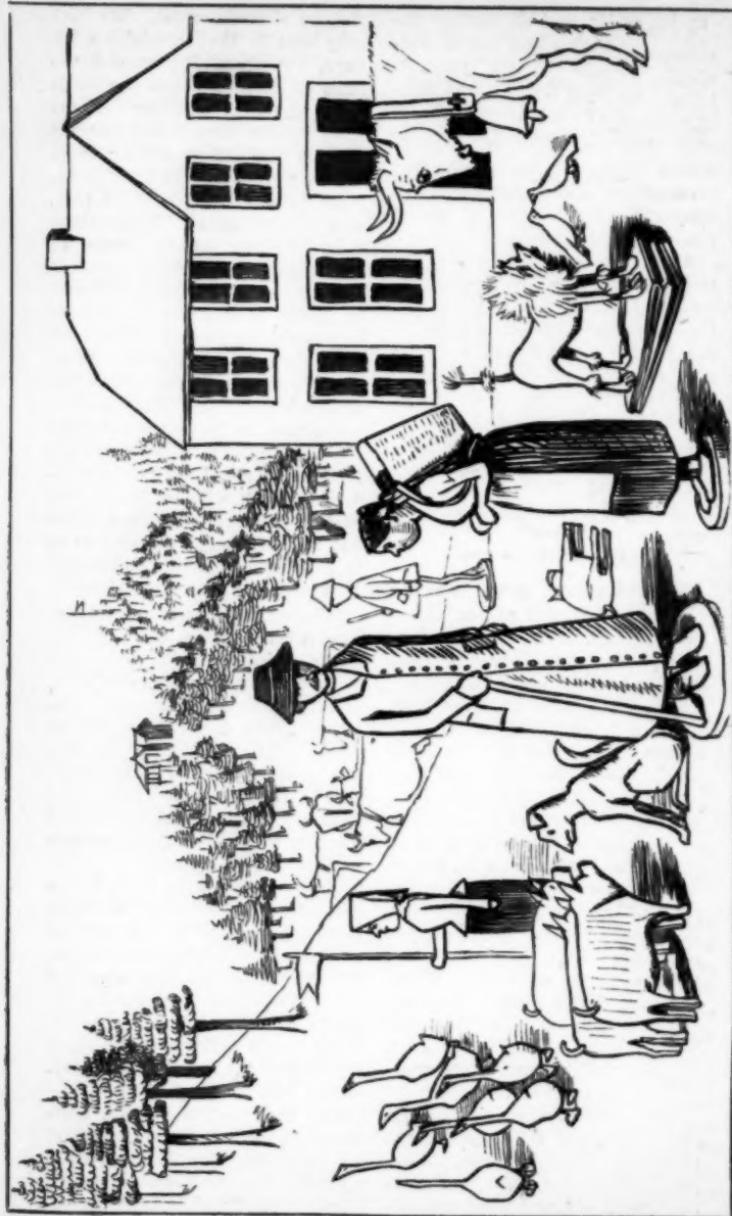
FASHIONABLE HARZBURG.

wide and smooth as we leave the old village behind us; on either side are large hotels, out-door cafés, and private, park-like villas, with prettily laid-out gardens. Through the gates of one of these gardens the driver turns, and stops at the verandah of a large noisy hotel. The *Juliusalle* is so celebrated for its (German) comforts and its admirable cuisine, and is so popular as a boarding-house and bathing establishment, that it is seldom, during the height of the season, that chance wayfarers can be accommodated. It is a large, rambling, booth-like building, with a strong sense of cooking and good living pervading it—an odour which, combined with tobacco, clings to the valley on a summer's night, and quite overwhelms the scent of the pines.

It is evening when we stroll up the valley, and the peasants are returning from the mountains; cattle, sheep, pigs, goats, and geese line the roads, and the people all

stop to stare as usual. We have only been in the mountains a few days, but these figures and the lines of fir-trees above our heads seem strangely familiar. Where have we seen these grave peasants in long coats, these wooden-faced women with baskets on their backs, these spotted cows, flat-sided pigs, and uniform geese? Where these formal-looking houses, rows of stiff-looking trees, white, staring dogs, and grave, fat-faced children? It is the child's box of German toys, suddenly opened and turned out before us; the strange impression produced upon a child—who shall say how many years ago?—reproduced in life before our eyes! Here are all the living materials for 'Noah's arks' and 'Christmas-trees.' Noah, with his long brown coat in stiff wooden folds, and his hat and stick, as presented to us in childhood; his wife and family in red, brown, and buff, standing staring vacantly in a row; the shepherd with his horn and gigantic crook, painted green; cows and goats walking home two by two; and pigs lying flat upon the ground, like little toys thrown down. Under the trees, as the sun goes down, our 'Christmas-tree' is lighted up, and the figures that move before us only want packing up and selling at two sous each at a child's bazaar.

We have called the Harz Mountains the 'Toy Country' of North Germany, because it is suggestive at every turn of toys and children. Every mountain we shall ascend is covered with rows of those stiff-looking trees which are carved in wood by the children of the Black Forest and the towns of Germany. Every hillside is a plantation—hence their formality—and there are complete forests of fir-trees of all sizes, according to the year of growth. The effect is curious on a mountain walk, when, after thread-



A VILLAGE IN THE 'TOY COUNTRY'.

ing a pathway with Lilliput foot-steps through a forest of enormous pines, you suddenly come to a nursery of little trees, a miniature forest, on which you look down like Brobdingnag, stepping at one stride over a mountainte covered with a hundred trees; and so on through the entire tour of the Harz. But we must not anticipate.

There are clouds at the head of the valley next morning, and behind the clouds it is raining on the Brocken; but the sun is so hot by ten o'clock that we are glad to get out of the valley and walk up through the woods, which we enter by a wicket gate nearly opposite to the *Julius-halle*, to the Burgberg, or castle hill, just above the town. In about a quarter of an hour we are surprised to find ourselves at the summit. There are the ruins of a fortress on this eminence, and there is, says Baedeker, a 'small but comfortable hotel on the Burgberg, affording a fine view. A flag hoisted in summer indicates that rooms are still disengaged. Guides, carriages, and donkeys can be hired at Harzburg. The ascent takes forty minutes.' This announcement brings numerous excursionists from Brunswick every Sunday, who accomplish thefeat in one day, returning to Brunswick at night.

Whether it is worth while for any one to walk up to this noisy little beer-garden, where the shouts of waiters and the clink of glasses drown every other sound, we will not say. The walk through the woods gives us beautiful peeps of the valley, and we see as on a map beneath us the chalets and gardens that are rising in every direction, and covering every available plot of ground. From the top the view is much impeded by the masses of fir-trees; but we obtain a good

idea of the formation of the valley, and in clear weather see the distant peaks and slopes of the Upper Harz.

Under the long verandah of the *Julius-halle* we have ample opportunity for sketching the motley throng which this little toy village has brought together. There is contrast and variety enough in the group before our eyes. Standing in the sun with 'shining morning face,' her light hair tightly braided, her handkerchief tied over her head, with the stolid face and fixed wooden stare that we know so well, there is little Mathilde, with her basket of white Alpen roses for sale. She is generally welcome, and disposes of her bouquets quickly enough. But she has no more tact than the rest of her race, and is sometimes decidedly *de trop*. In her round this morning through the café she has disturbed a philosopher at the wrong moment, and



THE PROFESSOR.

is the innocent subject of excited anathemas. The scene is worth recording for the curious contrast of the two figures—the violence of the professor and the stolidity of the girl; whilst underlying the irritability of the one and the immobility of the other there is a chord of sympathy and a mutual understanding, which we, as foreigners, cannot penetrate. If we were not accustomed to such scenes, we should be surprised to find them all together in the afternoon.

on the common 'roundabout' of the country, the professor astride of a wooden horse, and little Mathilde, with a baby in a basket-chair, whirling round and round under the dusty trees to the sound of a hand-organ, the ringing of bells, and the shouting of children.

And what of the ladies that crowd these watering-places, who are sitting about in the rooms leading on to the gardens, and in the summer-houses, reading and chatting over their worsted-work? The younger ones are of the fashionable colourless type which we all know well. They have evidently plenty of money, and have put themselves into the hands of a modiste from Berlin; they have put on whatever they have been told, regardless of whether the colour suits them, or whether the pattern of their dresses should be worn by short people or tall, stout or slight. Thus their individuality is gone; they are all moulded to one pattern, in different colours, like machine-made toys; the only vestige of nature is in their almost expressionless faces, in the blue of their large eyes, and in the glimpses of wonderfully fair hair. What is to be said, what description can we give, from such meagre details? The artist is at a disadvantage in every respect; for these dresses have been made so beautifully, and packed so carefully that they do not even fall into natural folds, or give the slightest expression or character to the wearer. Moreover, these young girls can neither walk erect nor show any grace of motion. Velasquez was a court painter, and struggled manfully with the stiff hooped dresses of his time, giving wondrous individuality to the heads of most of his portraits; Murillo had easier work in painting picturesque rags and limbs of beggar-boys. Were a great painter in Harzburg to-day,

he would find little work to his hand. One head only in all this assembly stands out with marked character and individuality; it is unfashionable and prosaic, but not uninteresting. There is a concert of young people just commenced in the inner room, and a lady who has been working near us stops to listen; we note it rapidly in this sketch, but it is worthy the pencil of Holbein.

From Harzburg there is a carriage-road to the inn at the top of the Brocken, but the pleasantest way is to drive to Ilsenberg, and then walk, the distance from the latter being about seven miles. The walk is altogether beautiful, through woods, by waterfalls, and under the shadow of great rocks, until the upper and more Alpine region is reached. We pass through open glades and pastures here and there, then into a thick forest of pines, then out again on to the road for a while, following the windings of the Ilse. On our left hand, as we ascend, an almost perpendicular ridge of rock towers over the valley, and we pass a little signpost which tells us that, by a digression of three-quarters of an hour, we can ascend the Ilsestein. From this prominence, where an iron cross is shining in the sun about 350 feet above our heads, there are views of scenery wilder and more grand than anything that can be imagined from below. Continuing the ascent, which changes every moment from rocks and streams to the quiet and solitude of pines and firs—now walking on a carpet of living moss or dead fir cones, now coming upon a little garden of wild flowers, red,



A PORTRAIT.

white, and blue, under our feet, with red berries, Alpine roses, and blue forget-me-nots, purple heath in the distance, and above our heads mosses and creepers growing round projecting boulders—we come suddenly upon a little plantation of toy fir-trees, from four to six inches high, railed off like a miniature park—a nursery for forests for our great-grandchildren to walk in when the trees above our heads are turned into the eaves and gables of towns. No one touches these plantations, which are to be seen on the mountain-side in various sizes, planted out wider year by year, as they grow larger, until they spread into a living forest.

Here and there we come upon masses of felled timber, and the encampments of charcoal-burners, with the women hard at work, as usual, with grimy faces, and shawls tied over their heads. And here it is that our summer holiday-making parties come face to face with 'the slaves of the Harz.'

A young lady fresh from school in fashionable Berlin (who has come upon a pony) stares with all her eyes at a care-worn woman who has seen no more summers than herself, an 'old girl' of seventeen, who has carried loads of wood since she was four, and who knows of no life but labour.

A rest for half an hour near one of these encampments, and we are again ascending, meeting several more barefooted, wild-looking women, who are porters, coming from the Brocken. The path now leaves the stream and all traces of

the road, and we enter open ground, up a steep and stony path, across heather and furze, and between great blocks of granite, where there is no track visible; then into more woods, and so by an easy ascent of three hours to the top of the Brocken. The air has been crisp and keen, the sky is almost cloudless, and the aspect of the mountain during the last half-hour reminds us for the first time of Switzerland. We are climbing on up the last steep ascent, strewn with enormous moss-grown boulders, which hide the view above us, and are unaware until we are within a few yards of the inn that we have reached the summit of the famous 'Blocksberg,' the spot haunted by spectres, witches, and bogies from the earliest times.

Here we are in the 'Toy Country' again, but this time it is Noah and his family that we see before us. The inn on the Brocken is the identical form of packing-case which the religious world of all nations has vulgarised into a plaything for children. There is the host with his three sons coming out to meet us, the people walking two and two, and the horses, sheep, pigs, and goats all stowed away at the great side-doors. The resemblance is irresistible, and more fascinating to our minds than the legends and mysteries with which German imagination has peopled this district. As we ascended from Ilseberg, every spot of interest on the path, every weather-beaten pine, had some story of witchcraft or devilry attached to it; but the thing is overdone, and in this romantic neighbourhood there is too much devilry and blue fire. The traveller who would dwell upon the poetic fancy of Goethe, who would hear in imagination the songs of the spirit-world that



haunt this lonely summit, has little chance for reverie. The atmosphere is too theatrical and forced from beginning to end, and he will be more likely to find himself, on arrival, listening by force to some holiday-making members of Gungl's band—recalling the *Faust* of the stage, or Mephistopheles descending through a trap-door in a blaze of fire.

The sun is setting upon the weather-beaten walls of our house of refuge, and shining across the far-off plains as we arrive. The sky is clear overhead, and the drifting white clouds that floated round at intervals during the day now settle down in the dark valleys like little snow-fields, and rest among the branches of the pines. The sun is burning upon the distant town of Halberstadt, while the villages beneath us are all in gloom. Before us, in the far distance, there are little specks dotted on the plains, which indicate (we are told) the towns of Brunswick and Hanover; and nearer to us, just beneath, is the valley of Harzburg and other watering-places of the Lower Harz. Turning to the south-west, the upper district, where the positions of Andreasberg and Clausthal can be just discerned through the rising mist, we see a variety of pine-covered summits in undulating line. The view northward, so much spoken of, is the least interesting part, because, although you may with a telescope, from a tower a few feet above the inn, 'just see Hamburg,' there is little more than a speck to be made out on the clearest day.

Of the 'boogie' which haunts the Brocken, the famous optical illusion which, under certain conditions of the atmosphere, reflects figures of enormous size on the clouds, we can only speak by hearsay, as it is seldom seen—but once

or twice during a summer. The 'spectre' is said to appear at sunset, or 'whenever the mists happen to ascend perpendicularly out of the valley, on the side opposite to the sun and leave the mountain-top itself free from vapour. The shadow of the mountain is reflected against the perpendicular face of the rising vapour as it were against a gigantic wall. The inn then becomes a palace in size, and the human beings on the summit become giants.' This spectre and a dance of witches on the eve of May-day are the two 'associations of the Brocken' which no traveller comes away without hearing of, nor without having pointed out to him the great granite blocks called the 'Witches' Altar,' the 'Devil's Pulpit,' and other monuments commemorative, it is said, of the conversion of the early Saxons to Christianity. The ordinary aspect of the Brocken is described in a few words by Andersen. 'It gives me,' he says, 'an idea of a northern tumulus on a grand scale. Here stone lies piled on stone, and a strange silence rests over the whole. Not a bird twitters in the low pines; round about are white grave-flowers growing in the high moss, and stones lie in masses on the sides of the mountain-top. We were now on the top, but everything was in a mist; it began to blow and the wind drove the clouds onwards over the mountain's top as if they were flocks of sheep.' And thus it is in a few minutes with us. In less time than it takes to write these lines the whole aspect of the mountain has changed, the clouds have come up from the valleys, and we are under a veil of mist. Here and there it has cleared for a moment, and revealed to us the only 'spectres of the Brocken' we ever saw during our stay—sad, wet,

and weary travellers waiting for the view. Another minute and they disappear in the clouds, and the strains of Gounod's music

coming from the *Brockenhaus*, and the sounds of voices and the clinking of glasses, make us beat a retreat. The transition to the



SPECTRES OF THE BROCKEN.

scene within is as startling as a transformation scene in a pantomime, and almost as grotesque. Here are at least sixty people

at work on the viands which the slaves of the Harz had brought up from the valleys on their backs. The accommodation for travellers is, of course, rough and plain, but we are all sheltered from the pitiless storm outside, and are kept alive until the morning.

The day breaks and the sun rises over the plains of Europe, while we sixty travellers are enveloped in mist. There is a view at sunrise here once in a summer, which those who have not slept on the Righi or Mount Pilate, in Switzerland, describe as surpassingly beautiful. It is a relief to descend again into the region of sunshine, to walk across green pastures, and in moss-covered woods, to rest by picturesque waterfalls, and hear the thunder of the stream, swollen by the clouds that we have left behind us. It is a beautiful romantic



IN THE BROCKENHAUS.

crowded together—English, Americans, French, Spaniards, and Germans, the latter already hard

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walk by the footpaths down to Wernigerode; we meet hardly any travellers, only a few charcoal-burners and woodmen, for the first two hours, when the path by the stream, winding out between the granite rocks, crosses a rough wooden bridge, and we come suddenly on two figures that have a homely aspect. Soon we find a café, and a little bazaar for the sale of photographs, crystals, and the like. There are about twenty Germans reposing after the labours of the climb to this spot from Wernigerode (they have left their carriages a few feet below), and various restoratives are being applied by the host in the kitchen of his wood cabin. From hence through Hasserode to Wernigerode we meet more holiday groups than we have done on our travels.

horses, and people driving about in the fashions of Berlin. But changes are being made rapidly at Wernigerode: the castle and beautiful park, with its woods that skirt the northern slopes of the mountains, remain, but the property is passing into Prussian hands, and the old town itself, which was modernised after the fire in 1844, will soon lose its antique character. It is a spot much too delightful and healthy as a residence, and altogether too valuable, in the vicinity of such beautiful scenery, to escape this fate; and no one but the antiquary or the artist need regret it, for with railway communication, and good roads and walks, it is one of the best situations for a residence during summer. There are a few fine old timber houses left, and the Rathhaus that we have sketched on the market-place, in the front of our hotel windows, is both picturesque and curious.

The fine broad road by which we leave the town on our way to Elbingerode is lined with people promenading on this fine summer afternoon; there are girls' schools, loungers, and ennuyées, fashionable equestrians, and numerous handsome carriages, but none of the walking parties that we see elsewhere in the neighbourhood of mountains, and very few knapsacks or dusty pedestrians.

It is a sudden change to civilisation to approach Wernigerode from the mountains. On descending from the Brocken we are scarcely prepared for a macadamised road a mile long, lined with modern villas and pleasure-gardens, and to see fine carriages and

There is a good carriage road to Elbingerode, past which, with its hard-working and dingy population, through the valleys where the smoke hangs over us, and the fumes from the mines seem to blight the land, through dreary valleys, with strange forms of



rocks on either side, we come in about three hours to the village of Rübeland, deep in the gorge through which runs the river

Bode. Here, as at Elbingerode, there is no thought of natural beauty, and the valley is picturesque in spite of its inhabitants.



THE RATHAUS, WERNIGERODE.

The general aspect is of work, smoke, and the grinding of machinery, and the people, from their appearance, might have come from Staffordshire, in England. On a fine summer's day many visitors come to see the celebrated stalactite caverns, and give Rübeland for the time a holiday aspect. In front of the inn ('Goldener Löwe') there are numerous carriages and guides to conduct visitors to the caverns; in short, Rübeland is turned into a show-place during three months in the year. Every traveller who drives through this sombre valley is stopped at the door of the inn, and a waiter, in the full dress of civilisation, is ready to receive him; his thoughts are turned at once from the romantic aspect of the valley, from the spots immortalised by Goethe and Schiller, to the most prosaic associations; and it is well to abandon himself at once to the situation, for in Rübeland there is no escape. 'To dine, and see the caverns lighted

by Bengal lights,' is the programme for all.



THE WAITER'S GREETING.

These stalactite caverns, which extend for long distances under the limestone rocks at Rübeland, assume the most fantastic shapes, and when lighted up are a wonderful sight. The principal caves

shown to visitors are the *Bau-mannshöhle* and the *Bielshöhle*, the former a natural cavern, discovered more than two hundred years ago. It is now entered by an opening cut in the rocks, 144 feet above the village, through which visitors descend by spiral staircases and ladders. The finest stalactites have long been removed from Rübeland, and it is only here and there that we get a glimpse of those wonderful colours which have inspired German poets of all ages.

Passing up the valley of the Bode, leaving the black iron foundries and ochre mines, we soon arrive at a bleak, flat table-land, where the air is keen and fresh, and, in about two hours after leaving Rübeland, turn off suddenly from the high road to a spot where a view bursts upon us as unexpected as it is beautiful.

We are at the Ziegenkoff, on the heights above Blankenburg, a promontory 1360 feet above the plains, with an uninterrupted view looking northward and eastward, which may be fairly called 'one of the noblest in the Harz.' The plateau of mountains on which we have been travelling here ends abruptly; it is the end of the upper world, but the plains seem illimitable. It is about an hour before sunset when we arrive; the air is still and the sky is clear, with a few little clouds over the plain and on the hills behind us, obscuring the sun's brightest rays. There is nothing between us and Berlin, nothing to impede the view, which is too extensive to describe adequately in this article.*

There is the castle, or Schloss,

* See *The Harz Mountains: a Tour in the Toy Country.* By HENRY BLACKBURN. With forty illustrations and map. London: Sampson Low and Co., 1873.

on the heights, the town of Blankenburg at our feet, the strange wall of rocks, with their goblin histories, which crest the hills in the middle distance, the curves of the valleys, the smooth pastures, the undulating woods, and the roads winding away across the plains. Its central point of interest is the church spire, with its cluster of houses spreading upward to the protecting walls of the château, with its massive walls and terraces fringed with trees. There is the most exquisite variety of forms in their curves and windings, which are worthy of study, if only as suggestive of feudal times, when the feeling of support and protection from the castle was a natural expression of the people, and not, as now, only a picturesque effect.

Descending to the town, we find the streets of Blankenburg as rough and ill-paved as any artist could desire. The buildings are most interesting; there is something to study in the exterior of nearly every house, and the outline is varied in every gable. The perspective down the steep streets near the old market-place, which is almost under the walls of the castle, is full of variety and colour, and the figures of the market women have a more picturesque aspect than in any other town in the Harz. Blankenburg, as we have said, is old-fashioned and 'homely,' and we are introduced at the *table d'hôte* of the principal inn to some characteristics of the country. Opposite to us, for instance, is seated a general in the Prussian army, whose appearance on parade is imposing enough, and whose information and tone of conversation on acquaintance are rather belied by his attitude and appearance when preparing for a charge

on the 'Mittagessen,' the event of the day in time of peace.



A PRUSSIAN GENERAL.

There are many curious customs to be studied at the table of the 'Weisser Adler,' where the host shows us with pride the list of distinguished strangers who have enjoyed his hospitality.

Thale, the next place on our list, is neither a town nor a village: it is a place which it is almost impossible to describe satisfactorily, and about which no two people are agreed. The guide-books speak of it as the terminus of the Halberstadt Railway, and, indeed, it is little more. The railway passes the actual village of Thale without stopping, its terminus being a mile higher, at the head of the valley, close to a large modern hotel, standing in its own grounds. There are promenades laid out, avenues of little trees, and a few summer houses springing up in the modern Thale, and there is an aspect of town comfort and convenience, including carriages of the last Berlin pattern, which take the traveller by surprise—an air of civilisation quite inconsistent with its immediate surroundings of smelting-works on one side, and bold rocky scenery and dreary-looking moraine on the other. The mountains which close it in are beautifully wooded, and preserved, as

usual, but Thale itself is little more than what is stated in Baedeker (*Hotel Zehnpfund. Rail. Restaur.*).

There is so little to see in Thale, excepting the inn, that we may at once ascend the mountain on the opposite side of the Bode, through a wood, to the famous rock called the Rosstrappe, an almost perpendicular ridge of granite, which stands out like a wall, and hems in the entrance to the valley. There is a path to the most projecting point, which commands a view up and down the valley of the Bode, with its grey rocks and trees overhanging precipices, its waterfalls and its dark recesses, and beyond, toward Treseburg, mountains rising one behind the other, covered with trees. The Rosstrappe is scarcely 1400 feet above the sea level, but its shape, like a narrow wedge, and its isolated position, with sides descending almost perpendicularly beneath us, render it one of the most striking sights in the Harz. The romantic legend of a princess having leaped across this valley is learned by heart by every visitor, and the proof of the feat is shown in the marks of a gigantic horse's hoofs on the rock! We will not attempt to describe the grandeur of the view from the Rosstrappe, because immediately opposite to us is another eminence projecting into the valley, from which it is even more remarkable. The valley is crossed by a precipitous descent of 800 feet, and by an ascent on the other side by a staircase cut in the rock with 1100 steps, to reach the 'Hexen Tanzplatz'—the platform of rock from which our drawing is taken. The immediate foreground of the view is, of course, an inn, where an artist might well take up his summer quarters; and in little nooks and

natural recesses of the rock he will, if a figure painter, find many subjects for his pencil, especially

the groups of thirsty natives sitting with their backs to the view that they have come many miles



THE BROCKEN FROM THE HEXEN TANZPLATZ.

to see. He will be continually disturbed in the middle of the day by a holiday crowd, and by much singing, shouting, and the

firing of guns to disturb the echoes; but the sunset over the valley of the Bode in the evening light, when the clink of glasses is

over and the holiday-makers have gone down the hill, is a



THIRSTY NATIVES.

sight and a sensation never to be forgotten.

There is a romance about the name and associations of the Harz that we all feel instinctively at a distance; but it is only when we come into districts like these that we realise the poetical aspect of the Harz Mountains, and understand their being chosen as the seats of the goblin literature of North Germany. We have seen, during the last few days, forms of rocks more wild and grotesque in outline than anything in Doré's dreams; and here before us this evening—across a dark chasm so deep and distant in its recesses that trees and woods look like little clumps of moss set in the recesses of a stone—there is spread a view so extensive and varied in outline that neither pencil nor pen can depict its beauties. Immediately before us there is an amphitheatre of mountains, clothed as richly with trees as the preserves of a private park; and stretching away beyond there rises wave after wave of foliage glowing in the evening sunlight, and a further horizon of golden mist, through which we see the Brocken, exaggerated in height and apparent distance by the mist

(as its grandeur is exaggerated in story) and by the clouds that ever surround it. Stand still on the rocks just behind the inn, and watch the transformations as the sun goes down; see its slanting rays lighting up the highest rocks near the Rosstrappe, the bright gleams that cross the valley hiding the intervening mountains, and leaving the Brocken soaring, as it were, in mid-air. Wait a few moments more, and the Brocken disappears in a cloud of rain, while the tips of the beech and fir-trees are still tinged with gold, and the valley beneath us is in deep gloom. Turn from this dark abyss—over which the rocks stretch out their fantastic arms—to the broad plain on our right hand, where cities and villages, far away down the valley of the Bode, are in full light of day, and the heavy rain-clouds that will settle upon Thale presently are casting shadows for miles across the distant fields. Watch the glow-worm lights of a town three hundred feet below; hear the bells of the goats, the 'jodel' of the herdsmen, the rush of water, and the distant thunder echoing near the Brocken.

See this view at sunrise and sunset, and in its various aspects of sunshine and storm, before reading what Ruskin says of the Harz Mountains in *Ethics of the Dust*. 'I have done myself much harm already,' he says, 'by seeing the monotonous and heavy form of the Brocken.' We could wish for nothing better for the credit of the landscape of the Harz than that Mr. Ruskin should see this view, and the one from Blankenburg of which we have already spoken.

At Thale the tourist who is merely passing through the Harz district may leave the mountains, with the knowledge that it is in

this neighbourhood that its beauties culminate; unless he is going southward, when it will be well to drive through Gernrode to Ballenstedt, where there is a railway station. The pedestrian who wishes to make a complete tour can work his way from Thale westward to Clausthal on foot as indicated on the map at the end of this article. It will take at least two days, for there is great variety in this walk, and the geologist or the botanist will be especially rewarded. The extraordinary forms of some of the masses of rock; the precipitous sides of the valleys, with trees growing on their walls, apparently without soil, one above the other; the park-like aspect of some of the breaks in the pine forests; the variety of trees—beech, oak, birch, sycamore, and chestnut, with beautiful varieties of ivy on their stems; the density of the growth in places where, if the path is missed, it is often necessary (but illegal) to cut through with a hatchet; the sudden and unexpected views that are obtained; the mosses and wild flowers that abound and have never been thoroughly collected—are attractions to the pedestrian, who may wander for a week without meeting a fellow-traveller, and find plenty of occupation with a sketch-book or a geological hammer.

At Clausthal we are in a district where the whole business and interest of the population are underground. There are bright green fields, beautiful pastures, old timbered houses in gardens full of flowers, with their red-tiled roofs, with creepers twining round them. There is sweet air from the mountains, and such freshness in nature overhead that the aspect of the human population filing down the paths in a long black procession, like some accursed race, throws a

gloom over the landscape this morning which it is difficult to shake off. Bleak, barren, and gloomy, 'a city of perpetual rain,' built on an elevation where corn ceases to ripen, where storms make havoc, and where there is no protection from the winds—a long, straggling, wooden town, built on the top and slopes of a hill, the houses roofed and their sides covered with slate for protection—a town with 'a desolate look about it,' which no one should visit excepting on some serious errand. This is the almost universal description of it, varied a little by accounts of the miners' *fêtes*, of the home life behind these dark timber dwellings, and of the doings of the young students who come from Germany, England, and America to learn mining practically in the government schools, and who winter at Clausthal.

But we are looking at the bright side of Clausthal. It is the finest summer morning of the year; the sky is clear, the distant mountains are in full view, and down the long wide streets the houses rise and fall in picturesque perspective until they end in fields of brilliant green. There is plenty of colour and contrast: the red tiles relieve the grey roofs and dark walls; over the doorways and round the houses (some with beautiful carving on their beams) there are innumerable creepers, and crisp bright mountain flowers decorate the windows and gardens. The streets are nearly empty, and these little weather-beaten wooden houses, sprinkled thickly on the rise and fall of the hills, resemble nothing so much as a fleet of fishing-boats at anchor off the shore. It is like the long ground-swell of a subsiding sea, on which there rides grandly—old and battered, its paint worn off, its beams strained, its figure-head pointed

eastward and glittering in the morning sun—the ‘Ark of Refuge’ of the little fleet that surrounds it, the wooden church of Clausthal. It stands high above the houses in the principal square, the little windows in its wooden sides giving it a strange appearance for a church. It was burned down in 1844, and at once reconstructed with the materials nearest to hand. Its design is simple enough: add a spire to the child’s Noah’s ark, place it in the rain until the paint has been washed off, and there is the wooden church of Clausthal.

Opposite to the church there is the chief object of interest to visitors, the Bergschule—the government school of mines and the museum. It is here that several hundred pupils from all parts of the world are gratuitously instructed in mining operations, having in the course of their studies to practice under-ground—every pupil having to learn the use of miners’ tools, and *work with the men* for a certain time in each operation. In the museum there are models of the machinery used in the mines, miniature shafts and galleries—in short, the whole under-ground life of the Harz Mountains is here presented to us in the easiest way. There is a very fine collection of minerals, classified carefully, and within easy reach for reference. The models of machinery, of the trucks, and of the different smelting processes are all movable and made to scale, so that a morning’s study in the museum gives the uninitiated a much clearer idea of the working of Clausthal than a visit to the mines.

The population of Clausthal is about ten thousand, and of these there are at least a thousand under-ground. In the processes of crushing, washing, sifting, &c., another thousand people are em-

ployed, and in the neighbouring town of Zellerfeld the same works are being carried on. One of our last days here is ‘the day of Sedan!’ the whole town is *en fête*, and no one goes under-ground. Every house is decorated, and the Prussian tricolour is flying on the dark timbers of the houses. From windows full of flowers there are red, white, and black streamers, and the streets are festooned across with flowers and devices, with the word ‘Sedan,’ and gigantic portraits of the king, Bismarck, and Count Moltke. It is a great day, and a great occasion to enjoy the hospitality of the inhabitants of Clausthal, and to see what charming interiors there are under those dark, weather-beaten roofs; what delightful rooms, with carved furniture, snow-white curtains, old embroideries, shining silver ornaments, lace-work vases and plates made of iron, wrought into the most delicate and beautiful open-work patterns, this last a speciality of the Harz.

Across the bright, fresh fields again, leaving Clausthal and the great smelting-works in the valley which they desolate—a walk on springy turf across sweet pastures, through park-like little forests and deep glades, between regiments of silent pines over hill and dale for six miles, brings us to the brow of a hill, from which we first see Grund.

In the midst of a series of what we may call ‘mountainettes,’ tinted with the most delicate gradations of grey, we see sloping woods and fields, set with bright, red-tiled gables and glittering spires, and little paths leading from them, with processions of goats and cattle coming down, led by toy shepherds (of one of whom the central figure in our illustration on page 220 is an exact portrait), and hear the tinkle of in-

numerable bells and the distant mountain-horn. This is our first impression of Grund. Winding down into the irregular streets, where old men and women are seated about, and the cattle that have parted from the droves are gravely walking in at the front-doors of their houses, unattended, we stop at the principal inn, in front of a market-place, which occupies a few yards of open level ground in the middle of the town. The view is limited from the windows on the front; the valley and the curtains of trees above and below shut us in from the outer world, and give, it must be confessed, a rather close feeling to one of the loveliest mountain villages in Europe. We are encompassed by rocks and streams and trees; and when the clouds come down and shut off our view of the blue sky, we begin to think it can scarcely be as healthy for invalids as is generally supposed. We are comfortably housed at Grund, but even in this retired valley there is no peace to-night. Here, as at Clausthal, the people have been keeping the feast of Sedan; they appear to go to bed at three, and to rise at four. As the last villager goes home to bed he meets the first cow on its way to pasture; as the last song dies away we hear the tinkle of bells and the summons of the mountain-horn.

The town has the most pastoral appearance of any in the Harz, although many of the inhabitants are engaged in the neighbouring mines. There is but one good inn ('Rathskeller'), which in the summer is crowded with visitors, who come to take the pine-baths for which this valley has, in spite of its visitors, an old reputation; but it is altogether more rustic and simple in appearance than any village of the same importance in the Harz. English or American

travellers are seldom seen at Grund, and the habits of the visitors at the inn are, in all respects, German. The *Rathskeller* is the market-house, town-hall, and centre of all the judicial business of the district, so that at certain seasons the scene from the gallery of the old inn is very animated, and the gatherings of the village magnates round the fire in autumn evenings a sight to be remembered. The inn is a rambling, spacious building, with remnants of the original structure (anno 1675) still remaining; it has been greatly enlarged, to accommodate the crowds of travellers who pay it a flying visit. Grund has a great reputation for its scenery, its whey cures, and its baths, and it has also a reputation for rain. The impression of half the visitors to Grund is of a valley filled with vapour, of a damp-looking little inn, with streams pouring from above on all sides, but of an interior warm and spacious, with large wood fires in June, and plenty of spiced beer.

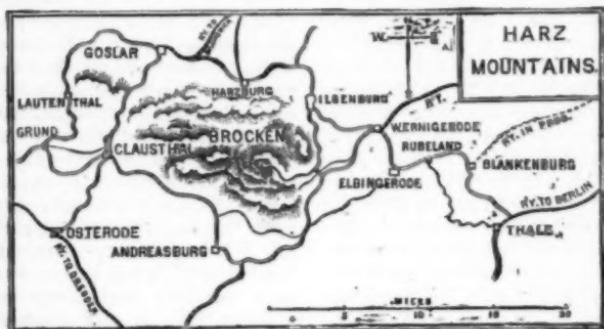
After visiting Grund there is no prettier or more delightful way of quitting this district than through the valley northward to Lautenthal, and then to Seesen, where the system of railways is reached again.

To the general question, 'Are the Harz Mountains really worth visiting for a short summer tour?' we must answer, 'No,' if by so doing the traveller should miss seeing Switzerland, or even the Alps of Southern Germany. It is not a place to recommend English or American travellers to visit without some special purpose. The artist would do well to come straight here from the nearest seaport, and spend a summer in the neighbourhood of Thale or Rübeland. He would never regret it, because he could work *unmolested*, and bring home a portfolio of

drawings of scenes unknown to the greater part of the world. With a knapsack, a little knowledge of German, and a few thalers, he could spend a summer both peacefully and delightfully; and we may remind him that the Harz is *not* a black country, as is generally supposed (it is really no more desolated or disfigured by mining operations than the green fields of the south of England are affected by the smoke of Staffordshire), and that the beauty of

its forests, the forms of its rocks, the romantic aspects of its scenery are still almost unknown.

As a land of bogies, tradition, mysteries, smoke, and blue fire, it is familiar to children of all ages and nations. But the romance of the Harz is in books and dreams, and at far-off firesides; in a holiday scamper, or in a sketching tour, the legends attaching to the district are felt rather as an intrusion, and disturb the quiet appreciation of its beauties.



THE COTTESWOLDS.

THERE is a district in England, little visited by tourists, only skirted, not traversed, by railways, clearly defined, and of a peculiar character, which I some time ago found amply to repay a considerable amount of attention. The Cotswold district has the true wold character about it, such as you hardly meet again till you come to the east wolds of Yorkshire. A quiet, primitive agricultural people, with modes of speech and character stereotyped from old Stuart days; squire, labourer, and parson all keeping their respective positions. The lands lie high, and the earlier and later fogs cling to them latest and longest. Only gradually have the higher grounds been reclaimed for the higher purposes of agriculture; little by little has the waste been reclaimed; the thin grass, intermingled with furze and ferns, on which the sheep would thinly graze, has, to a great degree, been turned into arable land, while the broad table-land continues to supply cattle in abundance. Those who stay at Cheltenham see the white heights of the Cotswolds gleaming in the sun, and are often impatient till they get away from that low-lying, watering-place to the inviting heights beyond. It is pleasant enough, and a striking change, when you are really there. You then perceive that it is a vast bilowy country where the downs swell into steep hills, and subside into gullies; through every little valley runs its rejoicing stream; the downs are thickly covered with those vast flocks which of recent years have made Cotswold mutton so famous. The district is very liable to be overlooked in comparison with the bolder Malvern

hills beyond, and the rich vale of Gloucester below, but its distinctive features are extremely interesting. The famous Cotswold Hunt have enjoyed many a gallop over these bracing downs; the Cotswold Naturalists' Club have investigated many a point of scientific interest suggested by the remarkable features of this region. The points of interest in the district and its *entourage* are many. Here is Cirencester, which might be called its capital, with its cathedral-like church, and the vast park of the Bathursts, beneath whose shades Mr. Pope used to write and meditate. Here, again, is Daylesford, where Warren Hastings rebuilt the old dwelling of his line, and which is now greatly improved by modern lake and lawn. To those coming from the Vale of Gloucester the air blows peculiarly keen and bracing, and in the old coaching days travellers used to say that between London and Penzance there was no sharper climate than that on the Northleach road. Such towns as Bourton-on-the-Water, Stow-on-the-Wold, and Moreton-in-the-Marsh tell their own geographical tale.

I think you will nowhere find better farms, larger holdings, or better kept, than among the Cotswold hills. In Cornwall the farmers have, as a rule, extremely small holdings, the reason for which is that Cornwall used to return some fifty members, and it was an object of the highest importance to multiply votes. But in Gloucestershire the farms are often immense. A yeoman will perhaps have some hundred acres of his own, and he will rent as many more as he can get. There is one family of farmers

over whose land, rented or inherited, you may ride for some twenty miles. The farm-houses are generally most picturesque, most grateful to an artist's eye. They generally have heavy, large mulioned windows; cool, spacious rooms; gardens exquisitely kept; trim lawns arranged for croquet; roses or ivy trailed against the windows; abundance of broad foliage; and the musical sound of fountains or running water. There are all the abundant evidences of substance. You hear now and then of a farmer who has perhaps figured in the character of a distressed agriculturist, who has saved his twenty thousand pounds out of the land; although these cases are not to be considered common. I passed a pleasant day in visiting two large farm-houses. They were hidden far away, remote from public roads, and approached by a long, pillared avenue. I was not surprised to hear that each of these houses had at one time been a nobleman's seat. One old lord had been the last of his line. Having no kith or kin, he divided all his property between his lawyer and his doctor. The doctor took out his share in ready money, but the wiser lawyer took the lands. They did not remain very long in his possession; he or his representatives sold them, and their value has immensely increased. I came upon old splendid gates, from which the armorial bearings had vanished, but which otherwise might befit an earl's demesne. Before this was a grass-grown pleasure, on either side bounded by tall, sombre trees; and in front was a rivulet, which had an artificial bed, and over which a fancy bridge was lightly arched. In these houses you will find old-fashioned English hospitality, and maidens' sweet as

English air can make them.' As you wander about in this unfrequented country, not bold and scenic, but full of exquisite landscapes, where you may rest in leafy covert, by alder-shaded stream, and in hidden dell, you will own you have obtained, perhaps, the nearest approach possible to Arcadia, and farm-house and vicarage will furnish both nymphs and shepherdesses.

There is an institution of the Cotteswolds which is a great favourite with the fashionable people of Cheltenham, and of all the country gentlemen about; this is the Cotteswold Hunt. It is not so popular as in those days of which Grantley Berkeley tells us so much, nor are the hunting grounds so much praised as they used to be; but still the Cotteswold Hunt is a great institution. They are a very kindly set of fellows, too, often enough, are those sons of Nimrod. A friend showed us the organ in his church, which had been purchased by the subscriptions of gentlemen in the hunting field. It was not the first time that neighbourly and charitable acts were got up on the field by scarlet-coated gentry. But in getting rapidly over a country on horseback you do not learn those sweet secrets of nature and all those lighter shades which are reserved for the wanderer and the pedestrian. The huntsman has to get back to his dinner at the now historic 'Plough,' to attend those balls in which Cheltenham delights, or to attend some invalid Cheltonian, if he is on that kind of duty, to those healing springs which are beginning to recover their lost reputation: all good in their way, but a very different thing to investigating the Cotteswolds. If we were scientifically disposed a good deal might be said on the geology of

the Cotteswolds. The county of Gloucester is divided into the three regions of the wolds, the forest, and the vale. The Cotteswold district expands, however, beyond the county so far as the neighbourhood of Bath. Murchison tells us that the geological formation of the Cotteswolds strongly supports the existence of a great channel of the sea, extending southwards, which would have presenting headlands like those of a shore formed by the action of a sea acting upon the soft and hard materials. The geological formation is almost exactly like that of the South Sea islands. Any one who wishes to have an idea of the oolitic formation can easily acquire such by taking up a handful of earth and picking out the pieces of shells. Dr. Wright, the well-known geologist, has published a remarkable paper on the correlation of the Jurassic rocks of the Côte d'Or and the Cotteswold hills. The Cotteswold hills, he tells us, are the miniature Jura of Gloucestershire. His pamphlet is a fine instance of comparative geology, and must be full of interest for the scientific reader. Another scientific account of the Cotteswolds should be mentioned—Mr. Lygett's 'Handbook to the Cotteswold Hills.' He goes thoroughly into the geology, and discusses the ancient flora and fauna of the region. The Cotteswolds have also had their poet. Towards the close of the seventeenth century there resided at the parsonage of Naunton, one of whom Anthony Wood declares that he had the character, in its way not a bad one, of a frequent and edifying preacher and a good neighbour. He wrote a book of indifferent English and Latin poems, called '*Nymphæ Libethsis, or the Cotswold Muse,*' of which the worthy Mr. Egerton

Brydges republished an edition of forty-one copies. It is not so much with the literary and scientific aspect as with the scenery that I am concerned. As the railway traveller goes from Bristol to Worcester he sees in the distance beyond the vale the long ranges of the Cotteswolds in 'deep, receding, bay-like hills.' The great vale of Stonehouse divides between the Northern and Southern Cotswolds. But you ought to ascend one of those famous hills, the steep escarpment of Leckhampton, near Cheltenham, or Robin's Wood Hill, near Gloucester, to take in the whole of that magnificent prospect, from the tawny flood of the tidal Severn to the oolite quarries and the beech-woods of the ascending Cotteswold heights.

Gloucestershire, all the county through, is peculiarly rich in Roman remains. A man I know was one day lamenting that in every parish of the county except his own some precious Roman remains had been discovered. He had hardly made the observation when he was informed that a huge Roman coffin had just been disinterred close at hand, and several others were found shortly afterwards. The Cotteswolds are peculiarly rich in Roman remains. Right through the district there runs a great Roman road, bravely breasting all difficulties, as the Romans used to do, scaling every hill, and resolutely refusing to go round any difficult point, and presenting such a solid causeway that it lasts on through all the alterations of races and centuries. The Romans had a line of strongholds extending from Clifton Downs across the valley of the Severn to the jutting promontories of the Cotteswolds and the whole escarpment of their range. But the gem of all the

Roman remains is unquestionably the Roman villa at Chedworth. All the antiquaries go there, and it is a pleasant picnic place for neighbouring parts of the country. If you are an antiquary you ought carefully to read Pliny's description of his villa before inspecting the ruins. I shall not soon forget the lovely character of the scenery through which we passed on our way to inspect the remains. The road skirts Chedworth Wood, where one feels poachingly inclined to follow up rabbits, squirrels, and pheasants. I wonder whether poachers ever eat squirrels, which form, I am told, delicious food! You come out on the broad pastures, the broad shadows of a common partially planted with trees. A newly-cut road takes you to a gothic cottage, where Lord Eldon, the proprietor of the remains, has placed a curator. The worthy peer has caused the ruins to be excavated, and brought together a museum, and has covered up the different places with sheds, providing stoves and other apparatus to save them from the frost. The villa is of much greater extent and in better preservation than is ordinarily the case with so-called Roman villas in this country. The perfect state of the floors and the accompanying chambers bring before us all the domestic arrangements of a Roman mansion. The villa appears to have consisted of two portions, the residence of the family and the apartments of the labourers. There are probably other parts, such as storehouses, to be yet uncovered. The principal apartments look eastward, facing the valley of the Colne, with its beautiful view. They consist of a long corridor with rooms behind, of which the fine tessellated pavement is preserved, which caught the first beams of the rising sun, and would be deliciously cool in

the summer evenings. An octagonal stone-built basin was found which was supposed to collect waters for the bath. Some rubbish that choked up the channel was cleared away, and once more the clear waters flowed from an eternal spring in the woods as freshly as they did twenty centuries before.

The methods of flues by which the apartments were warmed, and the pipes, drains, and furnaces in connection with the bath are in a very perfect state. There is evidence to show—among other indications a mass of molten lead—that the villa had been destroyed by fire. Either the place was pillaged, or articles of value were removed during the conflagration. The mansion was situated on the gentle declivity of a hill. It was discovered by an under-keeper when engaged in catching rabbits. There was a huge warren, and the ferrets were continually 'lying.' When the keepers were digging them out they came on some *tesserae*, or square bits of stone used for making pavements, and this discovery led to the disinterment of the villa. It was found, however, that the rabbits had done a great deal of injury by breaking into the different compartments. Several hundred coins were discovered, all of them in the Roman period, and not any Saxon. Some are of the time of Constantine the Great, and a Christian symbol cut on stone brings down the date of at least a portion of the building to a time later than Constantine. An ancient road led to a small circular temple in the woods. A curious living sign of the former presence of the Romans is to be found in the large white edible snails of Chedworth wood. These are found in great quantities—as, indeed, is generally the case in the neighbourhood of Roman abodes. These were brought from Italy as

articles of diet, and all through the Christian centuries they have preserved their pedigree and their separate existence.

There is one special point of interest which has been raised from this villa—the probability that it was inhabited for the first time by a Christian family. When the foundation stone of the principal entrance of the villa was disinterred, a zealous antiquary caused the workmen to turn it up carefully, and the well-known Christian monogram, the symbol which Constantine afterwards adopted, the Chi Rho (first two letters of the name of Christ), was found sculptured on the stone. The same zealous antiquary contends that one chamber which has been disinterred, with a kind of apse, is a kind of baptistery; but, knowing how the zeal of antiquaries will lead them into the most ingenious hypotheses, I do not dwell on the fact. These, however, are links, of more or less strength, in the remarkable chain of evidence, proving that Christianity was brought into England, and maintained a long conflict with heathendom, in the early British times, long before the famous mission of Augustin. There is now an interesting literature of the subject. A zealous antiquary informs me that he has no more doubt than of his own existence, that St. Paul actually preached at Gloucester Cross; and in that case, following his precedent in Macedonia and Illyria, it would not be unnatural to suppose that he travelled through the Cottswolds.

Then, it is impossible to be long on the Cottswolds without taking note of the great question of the condition of the agricultural labourers. Mr. Arch and his friends did not put in an appearance in the localities that I knew; but the wealthy farmers at

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once recognised the force of the movement and gave an increase of wages in time. One's sympathies are soon aroused in favour of the agricultural labourers, whose hard case is patent on the surface of things. But after some actual acquaintance with the district, one sees that the question is really complicated and difficult. The farmer goes to his books and shows that there are certain seasons in which the labourer gets so much extra pay, that the average throughout the year is higher than you would suppose. Then the cottages are let at an almost nominal rent, and every cottage has its little garden. Then work is found throughout the year, and the labourer is not thrown off while his capacity for work is still in some small degree spared to him through growing years and infirmities. Almost above all these are the farmers' heavy contributions to the poor laws, which represent the state charities of a Christian nation. All these are elements for consideration in studying the subject. There were, however, two phenomena which struck us as being hardly reconcilable with each other and with common justice. One is, that we hear of farmers accumulating large sums of money—and farmers have frequently the knack of adding to their resources by judicious speculation in all the usual ways—and, on the other hand, of labourers going as a matter of course into the workhouse. I was greatly pleased and impressed by the general character of the Cottswold labourers. They seemed to me to be humble, industrious, patient, simple-hearted, very grateful for a very little kindness, very little drunkenness or crime about them, prone to lie abed or 'loaf about' on Sunday mornings, but always going to church and chapel in the

evenings. In the meanwhile the labourer goes on with his steady six days a week toil; while all through the black country sort of district the workman gets his three days' holiday a week. They are very respectful to the parsons, who, on the Cottswolds, always ally themselves with the country gentlemen, and, I think, stand almost too much aloof both from farmers and labourers. The true amelioration of the lot of the labourer is to be looked for in the gradual operation of natural causes. Lord Derby tells us that we might make double the amount of money out of the land than is made. When the transfer of land is simplified, and capitalists invest largely in the soil on the specula-

tion that the soil may yield at least as much as foreign securities, and millions of money will be spent in the country that are now sent out of the country, then agriculture will become a business that will require skilled hands, and quickened minds; dormant faculties of the labourers will be aroused, they will be better fed, better housed, better paid, and their improved condition will enable them to make better provision for old age and sickness than the infirmary and the workhouse. In this happy way we will trust that the pauper peasant will be improved off the face of the Cottswolds and of English soil generally.

FREDERICK ARNOLD.



FAREWELL TO SOME FELLOW-CREATURES.

IN raking over the ashes of the past, I find that the special ashes which most perfectly retain their quality of scorching are those which are inclosed in some imaginary urns, dedicated to the memory of some dearly-prized and desperately-lamented four-legged fellow-creatures of mine, whom I have loved and lost after the everlasting habit of this world of change.

A certain callosity forms about the heart after long intercourse with one's own kind. 'We love and unlove, and forget; fashion and shatter the spell' perpetually. And still we go on treading the social round cheerily enough, and eat, drink, and avoid things that are in our way with as much zest and interest as if there were no such things as false lovers and perfidious friends in the world. But our farewells to our four-legged fellow-creatures have a warm place in the memories of most of us who have not led that desolate thing, a horseless or dogless life. Looking back through my own life, I find that some of the hottest heart and brain burnings I have been called upon to endure have been caused by the onus that has been laid upon me of saying good-bye to some faithful friend who never thought me in the wrong—who never bored me with good advice—who never stabbed me in the back—or cut me out—or sought to improve my mind—or reviewed me—or did anything, in fact, save go upon four legs, with perfect fidelity, into any groove into which I desired to lead him.

Far away, nearly at the beginning of my life, Carlo, a brown, curly water-spaniel, takes form

and challenges my memory. He was the idol of my infancy, an obese darling, with a merry yellow eye, and a tail that was never known to stop wagging. Adorned with a thousand graces of body and mind, his whole career was shaded (disfigured would be too harsh a word) by criminal indulgence; like the grand old border chiefs, he 'took whene'er he had the power, and he kept whate'er he could.' In other words, he was an earnest and indefatigable thief. He spared neither the larder of the rich nor the humble mid-day meal basket of the poor. Accordingly he was not exactly in the odour of sanctity in the little sea-side village where we dwelt, and where all his little delinquencies were known and canvassed. And so the universal regret was not deep when a brief madness on my part eliciting a corresponding touch on his, brought him to an untimely grave,

I have spoken of his ever-wagging tail: dear old fellow! it was the cause, in the end, of so much misery to us both. He was watching it one day when we were lying on the grass in the sun; watching it with joyful eyes, and occasionally making frantic dabs at it with his smiling lips and shining white teeth. Being fat, he failed to catch it, by reason of being unable to double himself up sufficiently. And so at last I rose sympathetically to his aid, and with all my childish strength doubled him head and tail together, and thrust his tail into his mouth.

I must have hurt his poor spine most cruelly; I must nearly have wrung his neck in my well-meant endeavour to assist him. I must have tortured that dog more than

he was ever given an opportunity of explaining; for suddenly the earth struck me a violent blow on the back of my head, and something terribly sharp went through the top of my arm; they were Carlo's teeth, and in my anguish and dismay at this being the end of our alliance, I let myself drift into unconsciousness, and lay there like a stricken-down teetotum, for how long I do not know. What I do know is, that when I recovered I was in the midst of a circle of wrath, a doctor was cauterizing my arm, and Carlo was shot.

The wound in my arm soon healed. The one in my heart, caused by Carlo's murder, was a more difficult one to deal with. For a long time—or what appeared long according to my computation of time (I believe it was really a week)—I refused comfort, my bread-and-milk, and another puppy. At the end of that time Poppy came, and life ceased to be a wilderness.

Poppy was an English terrier pup, black and tan, with a suspicion of the 'bull' in his under-hanging jaw, and a suspicion of the Italian greyhound in his thin elastic body. Vivacity was his chief characteristic. He would gaily dance at and bite everything he saw. He would advance upon a bullock as gladly as upon a kitten. One unlucky day he advanced upon the heels of a lady who was standing upon a chair, and who had left the sylph-like proportions of youth far behind her. The whole structure, chair and lady, both fell upon him; and when Poppy was picked up it was with an injured back and a swollen head, and an altogether hopeless and touching air of having lived his little day.

We buried him in a sunny corner, and once more the world

was a howling waste to me. I was too young to word my woe: I could only feel; and I did feel very bitterly indeed. Happily for the rest of humanity at that epoch, I had not developed the power of writing anything more suggestive than pot-hooks.

Into the midst of this arid tract of mere desolate feeling there trotted a gleam of light one morning in the shape of a King Charles spaniel, of lineage high. He was the handsomest specimen of adipose deposit it has ever been my fortune to behold in this world. But he has already been immortalised in print; for he is the same Zinga, of whom Mrs. Ross Church (Florence Marryat) has made mention in her biography of her father. A magnificent little creature, who clearly thought it was enough for him, and that he was doing the whole duty of dog, by 'being,' and being beautiful; for he never attempted to do anything else definite. A highly satisfactory dog to possess; for he had the silky coat and the serene repose of manners which betoken an early acquaintance with abundance of filthy lucre, and the 'higher circles.' He went gently through the world on his golden-fringed paws, until he fell a victim to asthma in its most exaggerated form. As soon as his little life became palpably a burden to him, it was decreed by those whose will overruled mine that he should die. So he died, like a royalist, without a struggle; shot through the heart by a sailor, who won my heart for ever by the way in which he blubbered over the accuracy of his aim.

Before the grass was green on Zinga's grave a hamper reached our remote habitation one morning—a hamper that had travelled by train evidently, and that was labelled 'To be fed on the jour-

ney.' From the innermost recesses of this hamper there was presently extracted a curly ball of bluish-grey hair, which instantly unwound itself, and intuition taught me that I was the owner of a thorough-bred Skye terrier. He arrived in company with an Oxford brawn and a rare collection of hot-house flowers (they were not all in the same hamper); and I remember striving to write some verses (I was past the pot-hook stage), which I entitled a 'Triangular Appeal,' and which make me feel very ill now as I recall them. He was called 'Tip,' and I loved him well; but in the pride of his beauty, I was weak enough to present him to a friend, who took the dog and left me. And then for a weary time I felt that all was vanity, and left my kennel empty. For the farewell to Zinga was a very tragic scene, and the sentiment involved in the separation from Tip had an aging effect upon me. And altogether, I deemed it wise to endeavour to nip anything like a dawning affection for another dog in the bud.

I adhered to this resolution for awhile; but it melted away like snow before the sun the first time I saw 'Meph.' He was shut up, on the memorable occasion, in a wicker bird-cage in Leadenhall Market. He was a large-sized, long-haired, white Russian terrier, of an excitable and highly nervous organization; docile and affectionate to an extraordinary degree when his nerves were undisturbed, but full of a fine frenzy of vindictiveness the instant he was agitated. There was, indeed, a good deal of the Tartar under the high-bred Russian repose of manner which was his characteristic when he was calm; and the barbaric element made itself manifest on the smallest provocation. He was uttering protests all day

long against nearly everything that everybody did. If any person unwarily ran upstairs, Meph pursued and bit that person in the heel. If any one rang the bell, he would, with lightning speed, prison both hand and bell between his firm white teeth, while his black velvet eyes would assume a snaky glare that made one feel one's hour for being smothered under a feather-bed would shortly come. He would howl with anguish when he heard the postman's knock; and would pursue those public servants up and down the favoured locality in which he dwelt with a savage pertinacity that made me, his guileless owner, obnoxious in their eyes. He flew at every guest who came into the room with his hat in his hand; and he lurked in dark corners, in order to make sure that no one violated his sense of what was right by bringing into the house either an umbrella, a parasol, or a stick. He never omitted an opportunity of hurling himself upon a hearse or a trotting horse. I bought him some cat's-meat once from a vendor of the same who went through our street every day, and it disagreed with Meph. He marked that cat's-meat man from that day; and, to the best of his ability, made life a burden to the unfortunate tradesman. He ungratefully developed a dislike to the friend who had given him to me, always approaching him slowly, with a snarl and a stiffened tail, that were painfully suggestive of worse things to come. He bit me sharply in the cheek one day because I said 'mutton-bones' to him. Yet, in spite of all these foibles, he had the winning power to such a rare degree that the whole household were fond of him.

He was as strong as a lion and as agile as a monkey, and I be-

lieved (weakly) that these two qualities would save him from falling a victim to a London thief. He would spring up, like a goat, as high as a tall man's shoulder, which he would snap at if the tall man had happened to annoy him. He would take a hansom whenever the whim seized him, and neither force nor persuasion on the cabman's part could dislodge him. And I was proud of my pet's little peculiarities; proud of the interest he excited; touched by his extreme gentleness to children, and by his incomprehensible tolerance of organ-grinders; and, altogether, attached to the dog. Accordingly, it was a shock to me one day when many hours passed without any one in the house having seen or heard anything of Meph.

I had flaming posters out all over Kensington within an hour offering a reward that seemed to me to be absurdly inadequate to the value of my lost dog. But that day died, and Meph was not restored to his sorrowing friends. The next day I secured the services of an intelligent policeman, and in his company I penetrated the Irish quarter; hope, like the bird in the story, leading me on from den to den, as I listened to mendacious statements of 'just such a dog having been heard of there.' On the third day Meph was sent home, neither sadder nor wiser than when he strayed away; but just the same irrepressible Meph he had ever been, although he was thin and dirty.

At the end of a week I lost him again, and this time it was for ever. It was in vain that I again traversed the Irish quarter; in vain that I doubled my offer of a reward; in vain that the printer's art, in big fat letters, was brought to bear upon his case; Meph was gone from me for ever this time;

and I must confess that, outside his own family circle, I found none to mourn with me.

He had been my canine king; but he was gone, and Rock, a resplendent golden-haired setter, of the Stella breed, soon reigned in his stead. An Adonis among dogs, with his richly-fringed tail and legs, and his intensely golden hue. Thoroughbred, big, and beautiful to a rare degree, with a sweet temper, and smiling tawny eyes, and an affability of demeanour that only belongs to thoroughbred creatures, he was always in place—always in harmony with the adjuncts of every scene in which he was set. Whether you saw him, with his proudly-poised head, calmly surveying game in a turnip-field—or leisurely threading his way through Rotten Row—or stretched at full length on a drawing-room sofa—or sitting by his owner's side in a hansom—Rock was always in place.

It is like a hideous nightmare even now to me, the remembrance of the hour and the way in which I said farewell to Rock. Suddenly one morning he seemed ill and restless; abruptly he developed mischievous proclivities that were foreign to Rock, such as biting the hair of his own tail, pulling his kennel about, gnawing his leather chain, and, finally, mummeling up a little scent-case of mine. In uncertainty, but not in alarm, I went to a celebrated veterinary surgeon, and described his symptoms, and he undertook the charge of Rock, and sent for him that same hour.

I can recall each incident as it happened so well, for the recollection of it has been burnt into my mind by the knowledge I have now of a great danger I ran unconsciously. When the messenger came for Rock he declined to take

the dog until it was muzzled ; and, rather to my surprise at the time, he asked me to muzzle him. After making several fruitless attempts to get a muzzle in the neighbourhood I lived in, I tried to do it by strapping a broad piece of leather round his jowl ; but before I could do it Rock caught my jacket, and tore it to tatters ; and caught my wrist, and did not even mark the skin !

What I, remembering all this, felt when late that night I heard that Rock had gone raving mad, had done a great amount of damage, and been killed, I can hardly describe. One feeling only stood out clear and distinct from all others, and that was gratitude to the creature who had restrained his impulse to destroy when I was the object upon whom he could have indulged it. He was only a dog !

The last farewell scenes I shall attempt to depict here are those which have taken place between myself and a couple of horses.

Guinevere, a thoroughbred young mare, was brought home and presented to me by my husband on the occasion of my coming safely out of a long and painful illness. I got out into the world of action again, feeling indifferent about the majority of things, but as fond of horses and of riding as I had ever been in my life. The fresh young racing mare, who was not 'way-wise' yet, who was reputed to have an unholy power of kicking in her, and who had never been ridden by a woman, was an incentive—just the incentive I needed—for me to tax my strength and skill to the utmost.

She was a perfect picture of symmetry and glory of colouring. A slippery-looking creature, gifted with the tiger-like property of moving under her skin ; with a

sleek, glistening, chestnut coat, and a wild, large, white-balled, rolling eye, and the most inflammable temper that ever a horse was afflicted with. She would shrink from her girths, down, down, till she nearly grovelled in the dust, and then rise with a jerk and a shriek, as she bounded in the air, and strove to burst free from every incumbrance. She was as wild as a moorland breeze, and as invigorating and healthful to deal with ; for she brought all her rider's powers into play. A supple, beautiful, fascinating, fickle creature, she would pass a donkey in full bray, or a German band in full blast, and then feign to be terror-stricken into a series of dislocating buck-jumps at sight of a church, or a carriage, or a child. Nevertheless, when the verdict that she was to go was passed upon her, because common discretion decreed that she was too dangerous, I bemoaned my wild beauty bitterly. She took the opportunity of looking handsomer than she had ever looked before, when she was led round for the last time, to say farewell to me ; she was as gentle as a lamb, and as mild as a May morn, that day ; so mild and gentle, indeed, that we nearly rescinded our determination of selling her ; and expressed our feelings by misquoting Mrs. Norton's famous 'Arab Steed' to any one who would listen to us. I think bright Guinevere felt parting with us too ; for shortly after she committed suicide by dashing her brains out against the trunk of a tree.

Six years ago a sturdy young chestnut cob came into my possession. I was living in a small country village at the time, and I bought the rough, unbroken young animal for the sake of giving myself plenty of outdoor employment. I broke her both to

harness and to the saddle; educated her entirely, in fact, and grew thoroughly fond of my pupil. For six years Stella has conscientiously carried me and my children about with satisfaction and safety. She does not know the way either to stumble or fall down; and I have ridden her for the last time this week.

For Stella is sold this day, and the pain of parting with her is too young for me to be able to

portray it properly on paper just yet. What comfort there would be in sharing the thorough faith of the Indian hunter, and feeling sure that in the Spirit Land our horses and dogs will be with us again. If I do meet them in the future, I shall unquestionably disregard the fact of having sold them here below, and shall claim the sole right of possession in all the four-legged fellow-creatures who have been mine on earth.

ANNIE THOMAS CUDLIP.







D E R E V A R A G H.

A Legend of the Great Lake Serpent.

SAIN'T PATRICK walked in the May-dawn fair,
 Chanting to heaven his matin prayer,
 By the pleasant banks of Lough Derevaragh ;
 'Twas the year he routed the Druids at Tara,
 When he sent them howling across the sea
 To Mona's Isle and to Brittany.
 The soft perfume of the nectared flowers
 More sweetly breathed o'er the meads and bowers,
 On that May-dawn fair, when it mingled free
 Its sweets with the 'odour of sanctity' :
 Dew-gathering maid and May boy's song
 Cheered the good saint's heart as he roamed along,
 And linnet and lark and blackbird and thrastle
 Made the woods ring out for Ireland's Apostle.

Saint Patrick walked but an Irish mile,
 Chanting his matin prayer,
 When, as he was crossing a rustic stile,
 He became aware,
 By the state of the air,
 Of a fetid smell, that nigh made him swear—
 If a saint could swear—and he halted where
 A monster appeared in view,
 Crying out from a brake,
 By the side of the lake,
 With a genuine Irish halloo,
 And as civil a bow as the creature could make,
 'Saint Patrick, how do you do ?'
 'Very well,' said the Saint, 'how are you ?'

'Faith, not very well ; for I'm after thinking
 One can't be that same without eating and drinking,'
 The monster replied, alternately winking
 And rolling its eyes, which were each as great
 And round as the largest-sized dinner plate.
 'Ochone !' it cried, 'sure my heart is *wake* ;
 My throat's so dry, I can hardly *spake* ;
 And a meal of victuals, for charity's sake,
 With a drink of good whisky to wash it down,
 Would make me feel better, I frankly own.
 I've travelled by night, I've travelled by day,
 With no companion to bless my way,
 With never a penny my shot to pay ;
 And I'm travelling on, if I get so far,
 To be laid out and buried in Mullingar.
 'Tis the place I wish my last bread to be baked in ;
 The place I wish my last thirst to be slaked in,
 And the place of all others I wish to be waked in !'

The Patriarch's conscience felt no alarm
 That monster or demon could do him harm ;
 Nor did he feel sick,
 Nor his sight grow thick,
 Nor his tongue to his fauces adhesively stick ;



Drawn by Geo. Cruikshank, Junr.]

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'Very well,' said the Saser, 'but say more.'

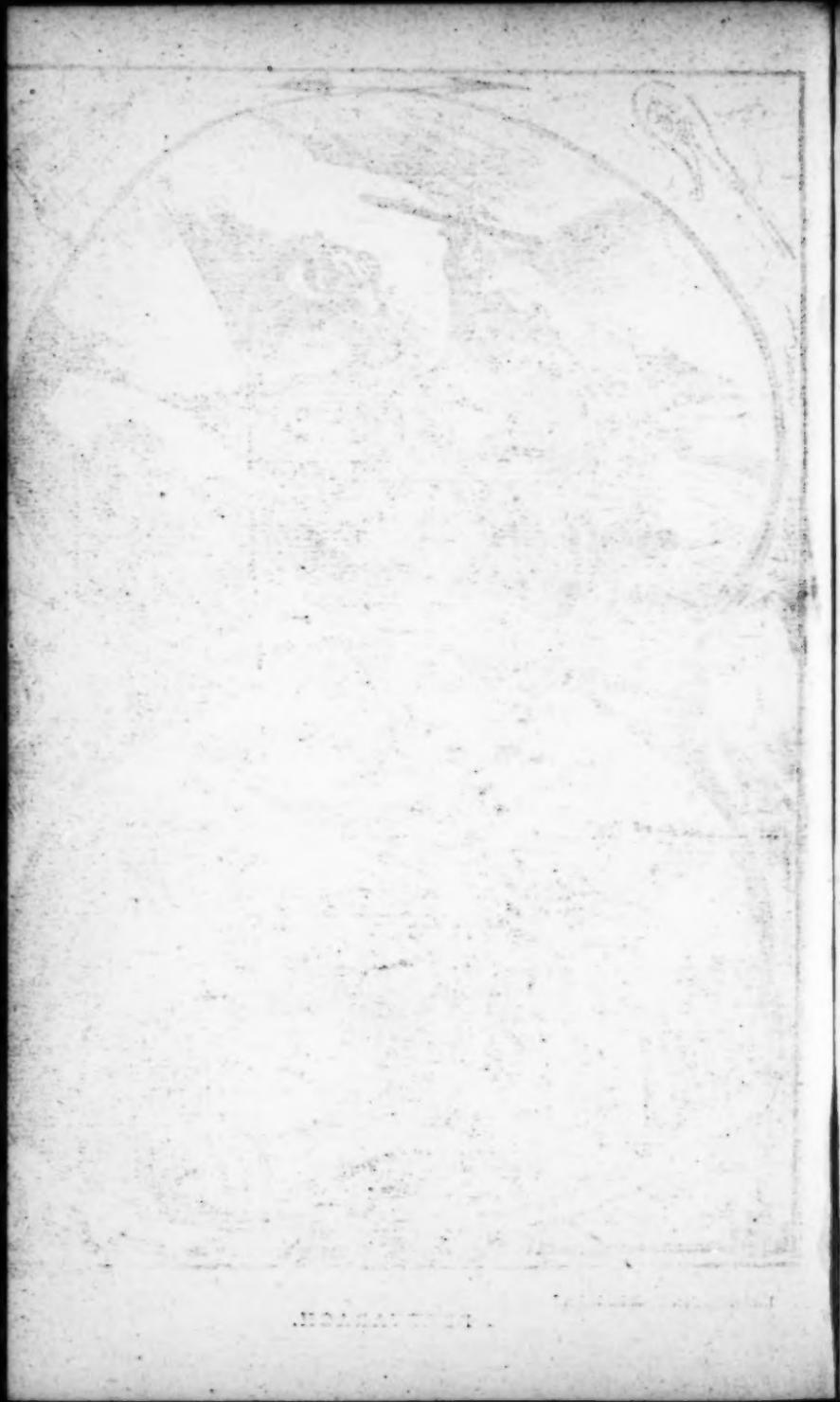
'Foolish and ungrateful am I after travelling
 About the world, day or night eating and drinking,
 Day or night working, also night or working
 Travelling on you, which were each as great
 And round as the largest round dinner plate.
 'Ochone ! it cracks' sure my heart is wake;
 My throat's so dry, I can hardly spake;
 And a meal of victuals, for charity's sake,
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DEREVARAGH.



Nor his hair incline
 To stand up in line,
 Like quills of the fretful porcupine ;
 But the sign of grace,
 As he slackened his pace,
 He described *vis-d-vis* to the monster's face.
 Then presented gaily
 The renowned shillaly,
 Cut and dressed by himself for his uses daily,
 Which, by all accounts, he could use genteelly.

Now, could you see with what tact profound
 He balanced his weapon and took his ground :
 How his good frieze cassock, so woolly and warm,
 He flung like a lady's train over his arm,
 Or a matador's mantle between him and harm—
 His Olympic *pose* if you kept your eye on,
 You'd fancy Alcides about to try on
 The bull or the hydra, the stag or the lion,
 A touch of his demigod quality
 In the cause of distressed humanity.

The serpent, fearing the Saint's intentions—
 For a serpent it was, and of vast dimensions,
 As the psalter of Tara expressly mentions—
 Trembled all over from tail to snout,
 And its cry of agony thus sent out :
 ' Oh, blessed Saint Patrick ! what are you about ?
 With that merciless claber,
 Are you going to belabour
 An orphan lone and a hapless neighbour ?
 With a tool like that,
 Would you come down flat
 On a poor bald pate that has never a hat ?
 If you would, you'd be tried for your life, Saint Pat !'

Intensely wond'ring, the holy man
 Reversed his weapon, and thus began :
 ' Heaven bless us and spare us, and mark us with grace !
 Such an evil eye, such a terrible face
 To the Island of Saints is a sad disgrace,
 And anywhere else would be out of place !
 Strange brutes in great numbers I've seen in my day,
 And dealt with them all in a summary way ;
 But ne'er have I seen yet, on sea or shore,
 Such a strange-looking brute as yourself before !'

' Philalu ! ' cried the beast, ' and ochone ! Philalu !
 Saint Patrick, my darling, don't look so blue.
 For if your fine *prayching* at all be true,
 Sure, the Lord made myself as well as you.
 You may boast in pride of superior station,
 And make the most of man's situation,
 Without insulting the brute creation !'

Said the Saint, ' Then say,
 My good friend, I pray,
 And say without fear or further delay,
 What are you ? Who sent you ? What brought you this way ?
 Do you come for weal ? Do you come for woe ?
 And the place you come from I'd like to know—
 Earth, air, or ocean—or down below ?'

' As to what I am, or what I'm about,
 If you're under the slightest fear or doubt,'
 Said the snake, ' Saint Patrick, your pipe is out !
 I've already told you I've travelled far,
 To lay my poor bones down in Mullingar.
 I'm no evil *sperrit*
 Condemned to inherit
 And bear in patience *bekaise* I merit
 All sorts of pain, and all manner of evil ;
 I'm no *owld* witch or an imp of the *devil*,
 From under the earth or under the ocean,
 No goblin or ghoul, Puck or Leprahaun,
 Who roam through the night and fly from the dawn ;
 'Mongst the sprites of air I ne'er sought promotion ;
 I'd never a wing,
 Never took my fling

A yard from the earth—not e'en in a "swing,"
 Much less through the clouds, like a volatile thing.
 An Irish snake I was bred and born ;
 Who says I'm not is beneath my scorn ;
 And if you doubt what I now declare,
 Let me kiss your book and most solemnly swear.'

' What, kiss my Missal, or touch a priest !'
 Roared the Saint, his blood foaming up like yeast ;
 ' Why your lips would fall off, or wither at least,
 If you dared to approach me, you unclean beast !'

' Then accept the honour and word of a snake, or
 My evidence take, like a Jew or a Quaker,
 That I ran away,
 And survived the fray,
 Afraid and ashamed of myself to stay
 On the hill where you preached our funeral *sarmint*,
 And I'm now the last of *owld* Erin's *varmint* !'

' Then, if that's your story,
 There's peace before you ;
 And my heavy hand shall not fall o'er you !
 Now Erin's honour and Erin's pride,
 And my own,' said Saint Patrick, ' are satisfied.
 The war is over, the victory's won,
 I warred with the many, and not with one.
 You've got no wife, no father or mother,
 Aunt, uncle, or cousin, or sister or brother ;
 And there's none of your race
 To infest the place,
 Or bring upon Erin renewed disgrace,
 Or fight with the neighbours and one another !'

Saint Patrick's words of conciliation
 Produced for the moment small consolation ;
 For the monster, reminded of slaughtered kin,
 Looked savage, and grinned an unearthly grin ;
 But thinking the elderly maxim right,
 Not to show your teeth where you may not bite,
 It quickly changed its grin to a groan,
 Groaning out 'Wirasthrew ! and ochone ! ochone !
 Every one of them kilt ! Every one my own !
 And what's to become of me, left alone ?'

Come along !' cried the Saint, ' and your groaning cease ;
 Let's be friends and good neighbours, and live in peace.
 If you're not too proud and don't feel too nervous,
 I've a neat little house that's quite at your service ;'
 'Tis made of iron, a sort of loose box,
 With hinges and bolts, and a lid that locks.
 You can let yourself into', and let yourself out ;
 And you've plenty of room in't to roll about ;'
 And coil yourself up in bran, straw, or hay,
 Like a diamond in cotton by night or day.
 You may lock it outside, when you'd like to creep
 'Mongst the feathery wild ferns, and take a peep
 At the sunset behind Derevaragh's deep,
 Or lock it inside, when you're going to sleep !'

The snake, though unused to the melting mood,
 Shed tears of joy, and was so subdued,
 It could only express its gratitude
 By wriggling about ;
 And from tail to snout
 It coiled itself up and rolled itself out.
 At last, accepting St. Patrick's offer,
 It attended him home to inspect the coffer.

Both pilgrims went eagerly off at score,
 The Patriarch taking the lake's green shore,
 The snake, as commanded, taking the tide,
 Rolling and tumbling along in pride,
 As if, by some sudden and strange metamorphose,
 It had changed itself into a playful porpoise.
 And travelling thus they came to Knockion,
 Where Saint Patrick's hermitage stood so high on
 The holy mount, he could see all round—
 See every sight and hear every sound,
 And know all that was passing on Irish ground.
 The monster, obeying the Saint's command,
 Rolled out of the lake on the green meadow land,
 Where it rolled about till its scaly hide
 Got cleansed from the slush of the inshore tide ;
 For the last mile or so it had found most trying
 To work through the fords at the base of Knockion,
 Where the shallow waters look not, as a rule,
 Like those of a fountain pellucid and cool;
 But black, like the Styx, which we read of at school,
 Or the Thames below bridge, in the place called 'the Pool.'

The Snake's scaly hide
 Being cleansed and dried,
 In the green meadow land by Knockion's side,
 With the Saint ascended
 The mount ; and they'd wended
 Their way half-way up, when their pace both mended ;
 For somebody cried out, both loud and shrill,
 At the top of his voice and the top of the hill :
 'The *prayties* are *bilin'*
 Such *iligant* style in !
 But, a very short while in,
 The rashers and egg will entirely be *spilin'* !

So, you'd better make haste, or
Come up much faster—
But, och ! I'm afraid of some foul disaster !
What the *devil's* behind you, my own sweet master ?

'Twas the voice of Dan,
The Saint's own man,
Cook, butler, and steward, and sacristan,
Holding out, as he shouted, a great frying-pan.
But his pan Dan dropped,
And he never stopped
Till the hermitage garret floor he topped,
And out of the window his head he popped,
Roaring 'Murder in Irish ! what have we got there,
With a *sarpentine* body and head of a bear,
Rowling naked about in the open air ?

'Dan Dooley ! Dan Dooley ! you great omadhawn !'
Cried Saint Patrick, 'this moment come down on the lawn.
Do you fear a poor wandering half-starved snake
That I found there below at the side of the lake,
And that begs a night's lodging for charity's sake ?
The creature's been travelling the night long and dreary,
Its stomach is empty, its bones are weary ;
So, come down, Dan avich, and look more cheery.'

'From snakes, toads, and *varmint* of every degree,
'Twas your own blessed self set *owld* Ireland free ;
And if that dirty *craytur*, whatever it be,
Isn't *kilt* with the rest, sure it ought to be !
So, if you won't think me, dear Saint, unruly,
I'll prefer to stay where I am,' cried Dooley.

'Come down ! come down !' said the holy man,
'If it's not your wish to come under my ban.
Let us feed this poor stranger and put it to bed.'

'Arrah ! where will we put it ?' Dan Dooley said ;
And he looked bewildered, and scratched his head.

'In the place of all others 'twill like the best,
Where 'twill lie at its ease—in the iron chest,'
And the Saint gave a look of deep meaning to Dan,
Which was not thrown away on the sacristan.

Now the great iron chest, so spacious and stout,
So studded all over with rivet and clout,
On the top of Knockion was standing out,
Like a mysterious boulder,

Which strikes the beholder
Up such an incline as too great to be rolled, or
Conveyed to the top, e'en on Atlas's shoulder ;
But why, or how'er
'Twas deposited there,
None for certain can swear ;
Nor (it's equally certain) does any one care.

The hungry brute, having soon partaken
Of the smoking mess of fried eggs and bacon,
Which Dan in his fright had just forsaken,
Looked scornfully up at the chest and cried :
'Why, it's half too short and not half enough wide
For ten yards of tail, forty yards of hide,
And—what do you say to my head beside ?'

' You can't be sure,' said the Saint, ' till you've tried.
 ' And you'll not,' cried Dan, ' till you get inside.
Rowl in, and you'll find that it's not too small
 To *serve* you for parlour, kitchen, and hall.'

' I'm sure it wont suit me, at all, at all !
 The beast would declare,
 And was going to swear
 By the Holy — ; but Dan cried, in tones severe,
 ' In such holy presence forbear ! forbear !
 So—the box won't suit, you
 Unruly brute ? You

Want us to add more dimensions to't ? You
 Would like us, it may be, with line and rule
 To plumb and gauge it—you must be a fool !

Why, goodness gracious !
 It's grand and spacious,
 Genteel and elegant and splendidacious
 (Unless you mean to be contumacious) !
 For Gog or Magog, or Fin McCoul.'

' Don't get in a passion, nor scowld nor fret ;
 But, if *this* is your *sintiments*, what'll you bet ?'

' A gallon of whisky or heavy wet ?
 And of either,' said Dan, ' the best we can get.'

' Potheen, if you love me, dear Dan, for me,
 Unwatered, and proof to the highest degree,
 To rouse my heart, and my spirits free
 From the sorrow that's bothered me recently.'

The trio went up to the iron chest,
 The boundary question to set at rest.
 And the snake, with a grin,
 As half loth to begin,
 Proceed to roll itself lazily in.
 ' Go quicker !' cried Dan, ' if you mean to win—
 To win by fair play—
 And not keep us all day,
 Hanging fire in that *Paddy-go-aisy* way !'

' Ain't I doing my best
 To get into the chest ?
 And until I'm all in there'll be no test.'

' But I must assist you in—
 Shove, tumble, and twist you in—
 You're such a slow coach—such a heavy-breeched Christian !'

' Aisy ! aisy ! friend Dan ; do not push me so.
 I'm not in, by some yards, as yet, I know ;
 And I win the bet.'

Cried the Saint : ' Let go !'
 ' Look out !' Dooley roared, ' for I mean to win.
 Mind your tail ! you spalpeen ! *Rowl* her in ! *rowl* her in !
 And he let fall that moment the lid of the bin !

With instinctive decision,
 To prevent a collision
 As well as the Saint's and Dan Dooley's derision,
 The beast drew its tail in, and saved its excision !

A pitiful moan,
And long-drawn 'Ochone !'
That would soften the veriest heart of stone,
Weren't the heart of a tiger, that moan would have shocked it,
Moaning out of the chest, just as Dooley had locked it !

Then shout after shout :

'Let me out ! let me out !'
Coming up from below, made a terrible rout,
Whilst Dan like a maniac tumbled about.
He doffed his coat, and threw off his wig,
And daneed on the coffer an Irish jig,
Which he changed to a hornpipe shortly after ;
And the Saint nearly burst his sides with laughter.
'O, you'll pay the bet !—so you will, my man,
Whenever I ask you,' cried cruel Dan.
And he jibed and sneered for an hour at least,
As he leathered the lid o'er the captive beast.

'The curse of Cromwell light on you, Dan,'
Cried the serpent, 'you scoundrelly Sacristan ;
Much more like a beast than a Christian man—
May every disease and misfortune attend you !
May the colic twist, the rheumatics bend you !
Famine and fever the devil send you !
Scowlding wife and bad *childer* rend you !
And your guardian angel refuse to defend you ?'

'Whether out of a box or the world at large in,
Your curse,' said Saint Patrick, 'is not worth a farthing ;
And you're stepping across profanity's margin,
Thus glibly to speak of an angel guardian.
That spirit so fair, to its mission true,
Guards Dan from the ills that man's life pursue—
From the devil and all his works, and you ?'

'Of the Angel Guardian
And heavenly warden,
If it's not a hard one,
I beg most humbly to *ax* its pardon ;
But as for Dooley,
Your saintship's tool, I
Will curse him truly,
And to heaven and earth behave unruly :
My curse light on him,
May thunder stun him,
The lightning run him,
And all good Christians like leper shun him !'

'You're a fool,' said the Saint, 'I can plainly see,
To quarrel with fate so remorselessly :
How much better to take things easily !
Retired from life you have no anxieties,
Rivalries, quarrels, or contrarieties ;
No claims on your passions, your pride, or your pelf ;
In ease and comfort laid by on the shelf,
Of all creation the happiest elf
You ought to be—if you knew yourself.
Talk of boas and rattle-snakes rolled in flannel,
On the other side of the English Channel,
In Gardens the Londoners call the Zoo,
About which all the world makes such a *to-do*,

A regular wild-beast's paradise,
Where the quadrupeds look so silky and nice,
Where the tropical birds look as cool as ice,
And the Arctic ones look as if stuffed with spice,
Where every one of the reptile races
Enjoy comfort and ease in their crystal cases ;
But the comfort and ease in which they recline,
And the *otium cum dig.* in which they all dine,
Cannot be compared, my good fellow, with thine.'

' As to comfort and ease, and the *otium cum—*
Whate'er that may be—it's all gammon and *hum—*
Gammon and hum of the highest degree,'
The snake replied with ' Ochone-a-ree !
For victuals and drink and the wear and tear o' me,
There will be, I don't think, very much to spare o' me
When this beastly black-hole has got but a year o' me ;
So, as I'll not swell to a size of a pair o' me,
I'd prefer Frank Buckland to have the care o' me !
And I'd like to see England, I must confess,
Or anywhere else to get out of this mess.'

' So you'd leave old Ireland and slyly cross over,
Turn Protestant or an advanced philosopher,
Hear what Darwin and Huxley have to say,
Stop at Exeter Hall upon your way,
Or St. George's—a still greater treat theological—
Ere you knock at the gates of the Zoological.'

' So let me go forth from my native land,
To seek freedom and peace on a foreign strand ;
Since I can't have either in *owld* Ireland,
I'll gladly part from her and from you,
And I'll say, when I make my last fond adieu,
You're the pleasantest pair in the world to stray from,
To give a clear berth and to live away from.'

' From Ireland and me, since yourself you would sever,
Be lost to us both then—be lost, and for ever ;
Though from Ireland to live far away you shall—*never !*
And now, Dan,' cried the Saint, ' for our final endeavour !'

Then Saint Patrick and Dan putting each a shoulder
To th' iron chest, like a loosened boulder,
They sent it down flying
The steeps of Knockion ;
And the beast and the box,
With their own momentum,
Where no bridges or locks
Could stop or prevent them,
Rolled away to the place where Saint Patrick sent them,
With a crashing din and loud tantararara,
Tumbling down, down, down into Lake Derevaragh,
Till they sunk in the midst where the deep waters flow,
There to lie for eternity down below.

The natives all say
That on every May-day
You may hear the Lake Serpent singing away,
If you rise very early. And this is his lay :

THE LAY OF THE GREAT LAKE SERPENT.

I.

Oh ! I'm an unfortunate snake,
 Boxed up here so nate and so clever,
 Condemned by Saint Pat in this lake
 To be buried for ever and ever !
 With soft words he coaxed me to roam
 From the place I was born and bred in,
 And promised to give me a home,
 With victuals and drink and a bed in.

II.

He showed me a chest huge and dark,
 Perched up mighty grand on Knockion.
 You'd think far away 'twas the Ark
 On the top of Mount Ararat lying.
 I foolishly *rowled* myself in,
 Whilst the Saint and his butler kept scoffing ;
 Then they shut down the lid of the bin,
 And I found myself *rowled* in my coffin !

III.

They trundled me into the lake,
 Rattling down the steep side of the mountain
 My poor bones—I thought they would break,
 For the pace there was fairly no counting !
 My head 'gainst the sides they went *crack*,
 And my scales they went *cracking* still louder.
 They rattled like nails in a sack,
 Till I thought I was ground to gunpowder !

IV.

That morning, before I set out,
 They gave me some rashers of bacon,
 With never a drop of good stout
 Or whisky, my thirst for to slaken.
 Though there's water all round, not a sup
 Can I get, night or day, through the *kayhole*,
 The mud has so bunged it all up ;
 And my parched tongue the drowth seems to flay whole !

V.

Adieu to the town of Athlone !
 Where never again I'll go wand'ring ;
 Where the *sodgers* in pairs or alone
 March in pride with the colleens philand'ring.
 Farewell to you, sweet Mullingar !
 'Twas yourself my fond youth took delight in,
 When on landlords and tithes you made war,
 But never on drinking or fighting.

VI.

My curse on that wicked *owld* man,
The cause of my incarceration !
Oh ! if I'd my will of you, Dan,
You'd be now in a hot situation—
In a sulphury bog down below,
Surrounded on all sides by fire-land ;
And I'd certainly move Justice Keogh
To hang all the Doolies in Ireland.

VII.

Now, neighbours, before you depart,
And leave me alone in my glory,
My solemn advice take to heart ;
For you'll find 'tis the *crame* of my story :
One half what you hear from the folks
Disbelieve, and the other half—doubt it ;
Or you'll find yourselves in the wrong box,
Like myself ; and you'll never get out o't !

JOHN SHEEHAN.



'NO INTENTIONS.'

BY FLORENCE MARRYAT, AUTHOR OF 'LOVE'S CONFLICT,' 'VERONIQUE,' ETC.

CHAPTER IX.

'**L**ORD MUIRAVEN, my love—friend of our new member, staying with Sir John Coote—desires an introduction to you,' continues Colonel Mordaunt, in explanation, as he perceives that his wife and her new acquaintance both look awkward, and neither smile at nor address each other, as is usual under similar circumstances. But Irene's head is swimming, and all power of action, or of acting, has deserted her.

She tries to smile, but the effort dies away in a sickly flicker about the corners of her mouth. She tries to speak, but no sound issues from her trembling lips except a nervous cough. She hears the words her husband utters, but her mind is rendered incapable of understanding them.

For in the first shock of this most unexpected meeting, she remembers nothing, except that Eric Keir is there, and that he is Eric Keir. She forgets the reputed insult cast on her affections; the irreparable injury wrought poor Myra; her mother's misery; the orphanhood of her adopted child: forgets the silence, heartlessness, and shame that intervenes between them and their last meeting: and remembers only that the friend—the lover—from whose presence she has been exiled for two weary years has come back to her again.

Muiraven thinks no more than she does—the rencontre falls on him with quite as great a shock as it has done on her—but feeling that he must say something, he stammers forth mechanically the

first words that come to his assistance—

' May I have the pleasure of this waltz with you ?'

' Most happy !' rising from her seat.

' Going to dance together !' exclaimed Colonel Mordaunt, with unfeigned surprise and a good-tempered laugh; ' well, this beats everything ! You come out, Irene, under a vow not to stir from this sofa all the evening; and when, after considerable trouble, I find some one with similar tastes to sit by and talk to you (I have offered to introduce Lord Muiraven to all the prettiest girls in succession, but he refused my good offices), the first thing I hear is that you're going to spin round the room like a couple of teetumts !'

' Not if you do not wish it, Philip,' says Irene, drawing back, and already repenting of her bewildered acquiescence.

' My dear child, what nonsense ! I like nothing better than to see you enjoy yourself. And I think Lord Muiraven pays me a great compliment in choosing my wife for a partner, when he has refused every one else. An old married woman like you, Irene—why, you should feel quite proud !'

' It is I,' says Muiraven, looking steadily away from Irene and into the face of her husband, ' it is I who have reason to feel proud at Mrs.—Mrs.—Mordaunt's gracious acceptance of me as a partner.'

' Oh, very well ! settle it between yourselves, my lord. For my part I must be off to find some less fastidious gentlemen to accept the

honours you declined. No sinecure being master of the ceremonies, I can tell you. It's the first time I ever accepted such a responsibility, and I'll take good care it shall be the last. It is fortunate that I have not more of the ruder sex upon my hands, with *your* idiosyncrasies, my lord !

' You shall have no further cause to complain of me,' replies Muiraven, with an uneasy laugh, as the Colonel leaves them ; ' I will be as tractable as a lamb from this moment.' And then the wretched victims are left alone in the crowd, standing opposite each other, and neither daring to lift a glance from off the floor.

' Trois-temps, or deux-temps ?' inquires Muiraven, in a low voice, as he puts his arm round her waist.

' Whichever you please.'

' It must be as *you* like.'

' Trois-temps, then.'

The dance has been going on for some minutes, and they start at once. But by this time Irene's mind has recovered its balance, and enables her to realise the position in which her sudden nervousness has placed her. Clearly and forcibly she recalls with *whom* she is whirling about in such familiar contiguity ; *whose* arm is firmly clasped about her waist ; *whose* hand holds hers ;—and with the recovered powers of judgment comes the recollection of that cruel day in Brook Street, when the scent of the stock and mignonette and the strains of the 'Blue Danube' mocked her agony, and her mother—her poor mother, who never recovered the shock which this man's insult caused her—came to her with the news that he had *no intentions* !

No intentions ! With the old hackneyed phrase comes back, in a flash, as it used to do in those past days, the remembrance of the looks, the words, the actions by

which he had raised her hopes, and made her believe him to be false as themselves.

The looks, the words, the actions which were doubtless but a repetition of those by which he lured poor Myra to her doom !

' Oh ! let me go !'

The words burst from her lips—not loudly, for even in our moments of worst agony, the stern conventionalities of society, which have been dinned into our ears from our youth upward, will make us remember where we are,—but with a ring in them of such unmistakable earnestness and entreaty, that he is forced to listen.

' Are you not well ?'

' Yes !—no !—I cannot dance ; we are all out of step !—pray take me back !' she falters ; and her pale face alarms him, so that he stops, and draws her arm within his own, and leads her, half blind with dizziness, to the sofa where she sat before.

Then he stands for a few moments by her side, looking awkward and fidgeting with the button of his glove, but making no further comment on her change of mind. She sits still, burning with contempt, ready to weep with indignation, and longing to be able to tell him to leave her presence and never enter it again—whilst he would give the world for courage to seek an explanation with her, or say one word in defence of his own conduct.

One word—one cry for forgiveness—the present opportunity is all his own, and he may never have another ; and yet his tongue is glued to his mouth, and he cannot utter a syllable. They are in the midst of a crowd of strangers—the conventionalities of society surround them—and neither of them can speak, except conventionally. So much are we the slaves of custom.

'Are you really not going to dance again?' he says abruptly.

'I cannot—I do not wish to—'

'Then perhaps I had better—Colonel Mordaunt is so much in want of partners—perhaps I had better—join him.'

'Yes!—do!'

'It is your wish, Mrs.—Mordaunt!'

'Yes!' And the next moment he has bowed and left her. They have yearned for, and mourned over one another for years; yet they can meet and part like other people, excepting that their words are characterised by more brusqueness than strangers would have dared to use. A sore heart often strives to hide itself by a short manner. It is only men who are indifferent to one another, and women who hate each other, that take the trouble to round their sentences and mind their periods. These two hearts are so flustered and so sore that they do not even observe the want of politeness with which they have questioned and answered one another.

'Why, Irene!—sitting down again, and Lord Muiraven gone!' exclaims the voice of Colonel Mordaunt, who is making the tour of the ball-room with another gentleman, unknown to her. She has been alone, she is hardly conscious for how long, her thoughts have been so bitter and disturbed, but her equanimity is, in a great measure, restored, and she is enabled to answer her husband's inquiry with a smile which is not to be detected as untrue.

'Yes; I made him go, for my attempt at dancing was a failure—I am really not up to it, Philip.'

'My poor girl! I am so sorry. We must talk to Dr. Robertson about this, Irene. By-the-way, let me introduce Mr. Holmes to you.'

The stranger bows, and takes his station on the other side of her.

'And where is Lord Muiraven, then?' inquires Colonel Mordaunt; 'dancing?'

'I suppose so: he went in search of you, I believe, to procure him a partner.'

'There he is!' observes Mr. Holmes, 'wandering about in an aimless manner at the end of the ball-room. He's the strangest fellow possible, Muiraven, and never does anything like another man. I shouldn't be in the least surprised to see him ask one of those girls to dance before he has had an introduction to her.'

'He will scandalise her if he does. Glotonbury sticks up for the proprieties,' says Irene quietly.

'I must go and save him from such a calamity as the scorn of Glotonbury!' exclaims her husband. 'Besides, there are half-a-dozen pretty girls dying to be introduced to him in the other room.' And off he hurries to the aid of his new acquaintance.

'Have you met Muiraven, Mrs. Mordaunt?'

'My husband brought him up to me just now.'

'But before to-night, I mean.'

'He used to visit at our house long ago, when my mother was alive; but he was not Lord Muiraven then.'

'Ah! that was a sad thing, wasn't it? No one felt it more than he did.'

'I don't know to what you allude.'

'His elder brother's death. He was a jolly fellow; so much liked by all of us; and he was lost in an Alpine tour last summer. Surely you must have heard of it.'

'Indeed I did not: I have been living very quietly down here for the last twelve months, and taking very little interest in what goes

on in the outside world. It must have been a very shocking death.'

' Well, I am not so sure of that, you know. He was over the glacier and gone in a moment. I don't suppose he had even time for speculation on his coming fate. But Lord Norham felt the blow terribly; and this fellow, Eric—Keir he was called then, as of course you are aware—who was making a little tour in the United States with me—why, from the time we heard the news all our fun was over. I never saw a man more *down* in my life.'

' I suppose he was very much attached to his brother.'

' They are, without exception, the most attached family I ever knew. Muiraven has only one brother left now—Cecil, and he is to be married this season. I don't know what Lord Norham would do if my friend were to go in double harness also. Yet he *ought* to do it, you know—being heir to the title—oughtn't he?'

' Doubtless he will in time,' she answers coldly.

' I'm afraid not—at least there seems no likelihood of it at present. We call him Banquo at our club: he always looks so gloomy in a ball-room. He is by no means what the Yankees call a "gay and festive cuss," Mrs. Mordaunt.'

She makes no reply, but plucks the marabout trimming off the heading of her fan, and scatters it carelessly about the floor.

' But he's the best fellow in the world,' continues Mr. Holmes, warming up at the sight of her apparent indifference; ' the most kind-hearted, generous, and (when he chooses to come out of his shell) one of the cleverest men I ever met with.'

' A paragon, in fact.'

' How cynical you are! You are laughing at my enthusiasm.

Now I shall not say another word about him; but should you ever happen to be thrown in his way, you will acknowledge that I am right. Here comes your husband again. I trust he is not going to drag me away from paradise to purgatory.'

' Holmes, you must speak to your friend. He insists upon leaving the ball-room, and his departure will consign half the damselz of Glotonbury to despair.'

' Just like Muiraven. No one has ever been able to keep him on duty for more than an hour. But I will go and reason with him. This is not pleasure, but business. He will ruin my reputation with my lady constituents.'

' Philip, might I go home? I have such a dreadful headache,' pleads Irene, as the new member disappears.

' Certainly, my darling, if you wish it. It must be stupid work looking on; but you are a good girl to have done as I asked you. I will go and tell Isabella you are ready.'

' I shall be sorry to disturb her if she is enjoying herself.'

' She is as tired as you are. Besides, she could hardly wait for me. I cannot leave until the very last.' And he fetches his sister, and takes them down to the carriage together.

' You are very silent, Mrs. Mordaunt,' observes Isabella, as they are driving homewards. ' What do you think of the entertainment?'

' Oh, don't ask me, please. I was in pain from the first moment to the last. I have no wish to think of it at all,' she answers in a tone sufficient to make Miss Mordaunt hold her tongue until they stand in the lighted hall of Fen Court. There the ghastly pallor of her sister-in-law's face strikes her,

and she cannot refrain from observing :

' Why, surely you must be ill. I never saw you look so white before.'

' I am ill, Isabella. I have been so all the evening; and now the excitement is over, I suppose I look worse.'

' Do let me get you something,' urges her companion, with more interest than she is in the habit of expressing.

' No, thank you, dear. No medicine will do me any good. All that I want is rest—rest!' And with a quiet 'good-night,' Irene drags herself wearily up the staircase, and enters her own room. Phoebe is waiting to disrobe her mistress, and she permits the girl to perform all the offices needful for her toilet without the exchange of a single syllable—a most unusual proceeding on her part—and appears barely capable of enunciating the word of dismissal which shall rid her of the servant's presence. But when she is at last alone, she finds an infinite relief in the mere fact, and, laying both her arms upon the dressing-table, bends down her tearless face upon them, and remains wrapt in silent thought.

Colonel Mordaunt, returning home at about four o'clock in the morning, scales the stairs without his boots, takes three minutes closing his dressing-room door, for fear that it should slam, and, finally, having extinguished the candle, creeps to bed like a mouse, lest he should rouse his wife, and for all his pains is saluted by the words, ' Is that you, Philip? I am so glad you are come,' in a voice that sounds dreadfully wide awake.

' Why, Irene; not asleep! How is this?'

' I cannot sleep, Philip. I have

been listening for your footsteps: I wanted to see you and speak to you. Oh, Philip, *do* tell me. Have I made you happy?'

She has turned round on her pillow, and sat up in bed, and is straining her eyes in expectation of his answer as though she could read his features, even in the dark.

Colonel Mordaunt feels his way round to her side of the bed, and folds her tenderly in his arms.

' My dearest Irene, what a question! *Made me happy!* Why, what had I in the wide world before you came? You have glorified my life for me.'

' Oh, I am so glad! I am so glad!' she murmurs, as she puts her head down on his shoulder, and begins to cry.

' My darling, what is the matter? Do let me send for Robertson. I am sure that you are ill.'

' Oh, no. I am better now. If I were sure that I made you happy, Philip—quite, *quite* happy, I should have so—so—much peace.'

' But you *do* make me happy, Irene. No one could make me happier. This is mere excitement, my dear. You must be feverish—or has any one been worrying you?'

' If I believed,' she goes on, without noticing his question, ' that I had always done my duty to you, even in thought, and that you knew it, and were assured that, whatever happened, it could never be otherwise, and that, if I did fail, it would be unintentional—so very unintentional—'

' I am assured of it, my child; I only wish I were as sure that I had made you happy.'

' Oh, Philip, you are so good; you are so good!'

' I am not good, Irene. What you call goodness is pure love for you. But I know that even love,

however unselfish, is not always sufficient to fill up a woman's life, and that I have laboured under heavy disadvantages, not only because I am so much older than yourself, and so little calculated to take your fancy, but also because you came to me with a heart not altogether free. But you were frank with me, my darling, and I loved you so much, I hoped, in time, that the old wound would be healed.'

She gives two or three gasping little sobs at this allusion, but there is no other answer to it.

'But if I see you subject to these fits of melancholy,' he continues gravely, as he presses her still closer in his arms, 'I shall begin to fear that my hopes were all in vain, and that I have no power to fill up the void that—'

'You have—indeed you have,' she utters earnestly. 'Philip, I never want any one but you.'

'I hope not, dear. Then why these tears?'

'I don't know. I felt depressed; and you were away. Oh, don't leave me again. Always keep by my side—close, close to me; and let us stop at home together, and never go out anywhere. It is all so hollow and unsatisfactory.'

'What a picture, my darling. Why, you are more upset than I thought for. Fancy an old fellow like me marrying such a pretty girl as this, and keeping her all to himself, shut up in his castle, like the ogres of old. What would the world say?'

'Oh, never mind the world. I love you, Philip, and I hate balls and parties. Promise me I shall never go to any of them again.'

'It would be very silly of me to give you such a promise. But you shall not go if you don't wish it, and particularly if the excitement has such an effect

upon you. Will that content you?'

She clings to him and thanks him; and he kisses and blesses her, and, imagining that the worst is over, lays her down upon her pillow (not quite unwillingly, be it said, for the poor old Colonel is very sleepy), and proceeds to occupy his own portion of the bed. But he has not been asleep long before he is roused by something audible, which in the confusion of his awakening sounds very like another sob.

'Irene, is that you? What is the matter?' he repeats almost irritably. It is provoking to be shaken out of slumber by the obstinacy of people who will not see the necessity of sleep in the same light as we do.

'What is the matter?' reiterates the Colonel; but all is silence. He stretches out his hand towards his wife's pillow, and, passing it from her shoulder upwards, lights upon her hair. She is lying on her face.

'Irene,' he whispers softly.

There is no answer. She must be asleep. It is only his fancy that he heard her sob. And so the good Colonel turns round upon the other side, and is soon lost to all things visible.

But she lies there in the darkness, wide awake and silent, overcome by a trembling horror that she cannot quell. For all the shame and confusion and repentance that have overtaken her arise from but one cause—the fatal knowledge that she has deceived herself.

All the good fabric, built up of conviction and control, which for two long years has been reared upon her prayers and earnest desire to be cured, has crumbled before an interview that lasted fifteen minutes. She has never met Eric Keir since the

fatal day on which she learnt he had deceived her till this night; and though she knows him still to be unworthy, believes him to be false—though she despises him and hates herself, she cannot shut her eyes to the stern truth—*she loves him still!*

Colonel Mordaunt comes downstairs next morning in the best of spirits. He seems to have forgotten the little episode that occurred between Irene and himself the night before, and can talk of nothing but the ball and the supper and the company, and the general success of the whole entertainment.

'It was certainly a very happy thought,' he says, 'and the prettiest compliment possible to Mr. Holmes. They tell me Sir Samuel originated the idea, and if so, I give him great credit. I don't think I ever saw so many of the county families assembled before, unless it was at the subscription ball we gave on the occasion of the Prince of Wales' marriage. There were several people there I had not shaken hands with for years: Sir John Coote among the number. Was Sir John introduced to you, Irene?'

'No. What is he like?'

'An elderly man, my dear, rather bald, but with a fine upright figure. Was one of the stewards, you know: had a rosette in his buttonhole, the same as myself. Holmes is staying with him; so is Lord Muiraven. Sir John thinks very highly of Holmes; says he's quite the right man for the borough, and intends to lay that vexed question of the railway monopolisation before Parliament at the earliest opportunity. By-the-way, I introduced Holmes to you. What do you think of him? Was he pleasant?'

'Very much so. He talks well, too: a *sine quâ non* in his profession.'

'What did he talk about?'

'I forget,' commences Irene; and then, blushing hastily, 'Oh, no, I don't. He talked chiefly of his friend Lord Muiraven, and of his brother being lost whilst on an Alpine tour last summer.'

'Ah, a sad catastrophe. Sir John mentioned it to me. By-the-way, I was greatly taken by Lord Muiraven's face. Very thoughtful for so young a man. Is he what the women call good-looking, Irene?'

'I should imagine so. What do you think, Isabella?'

'Oh, my dear Mrs. Mordaunt, I never looked—that is to say, how could I be any judge—but then, of course—and if *you* consider him handsome—'

'I never said so,' she answers wearily, and turns towards Tommy as a distraction. The child's violet eyes meet hers sympathetically.

'Mamma got bad head?' he inquires in a little, piping voice.

'He has very remarkable eyes,' continues the Colonel, still harping on Muiraven's attributes, 'and finely-cut features. By-the-way, Irene, that *child* has fine eyes. I never noticed them before.'

'Oh, all children have big eyes,' she says confusedly; 'and so have kittens and puppies. He won't have large eyes when he grows up.—You have finished your breakfast, Tommy. Say your grace, and run away into the garden.'

'But I want more,' urges Tommy.

'Then take it with you. You'd spend a couple of hours over each meal, if I allowed you to do so.'

'My dear, we have not been seated here more than twenty minutes.'

'Never mind ! Let him go—he can take another roll with him.'

'Does he worry you, Irene ?'

'I am very tired, and when one is tired the prattle of a child is apt to worry. Besides, he is happier in the garden than here.'

'He has certainly beautiful eyes,' repeats the Colonel, as the child runs away, 'and has much improved in appearance lately. Talking of Lord Muiraven, Irene, reminds me that Sir John asked me to go over to Shrublands to luncheon to-day. Very kind of him, wasn't it ? He saw I was taken with his guests.'

'Sir John Coote owes you a debt of gratitude for the manner in which you keep up the county pack. I don't think a luncheon is anything out of the way for him to give you. Doubtless he is only too glad to have an opportunity of showing you any politeness.'

'That is a wife's view to take of the invitation, Irene. Now I, on the contrary, was not only pleased, but surprised ; for Coote and I have not been the friendliest of neighbours hitherto, and it has vexed me.'

'Then I suppose you are going ?'

'Certainly—unless there is any reason that I should remain at home. I wish they had asked you too. I tried to get near Lady Coote for the purpose, towards the end of the evening ; but it was an impossibility. She was hemmed in all round, six feet deep, by a phalanx of dowagers.'

'I am so glad you failed, Philip. I could not have accompanied you. I am far too tired.'

'Then it's all right, my darling ; and I will leave you to recover yourself during my absence.'

* * *

He comes back just half an hour before dinner-time, if possible more enthusiastic than before.

'Never met with a more amiable

young man than Mr. Holmes in the whole course of my existence. And so sensible, too. Enters as clearly and readily into the question of the Glotonbury drainage as though he had spent his life in a sewer. We shall get on with such an advocate as that. Having been settled for so many years in the county, he was pleased to ask my advice upon several evils he desires to see remedied ; and I gave him all the information I could in so limited a time. I am vexed that, in consequence of his being obliged to leave the day after to-morrow, he was unable to spare us a few days at Fen Court.'

'Did you ask him ?' says Irene. She is lying on the couch in her bedroom whilst her husband talks to her, and as she puts the question she raises herself to a sitting posture.

'I did—urged it upon him, in fact ; but he was quite unable to accept the invitation. Muiraven will, though.'

'Who ?'

'Lord Muiraven. His time is his own, and he seems very glad of an opportunity to see a little more of the country.'

'You have asked him *here* ?'

'Where else could I ask him ? I am sure you will like him immensely—you have no idea how well he can talk—and his company will enliven us. I invited him to stay as long as he chose ; but he limits his visit to a few days. Let him have the best bedroom, Irene. I should wish him to be made as comfortable as possible.'

Her brows are contracted—her breast is heaving—her eyes are staring at him angrily.

'And what on earth made you think of asking him ?'

'My dear !'

'Of asking a perfect stranger,' she goes on rapidly—'a man we care nothing for—whom you never

set eyes upon till yesterday—to become one of us—to share our home—to—to—I never thought you could be such a fool!"

Colonel Mordaunt is more than shocked—he is angry.

"What do you mean by speaking to me in that way, Irene?"

"Oh! I was wrong—I know I was wrong; but you have upset me with this news. Am I not the mistress of this house?—have I not a right to be consulted in such matters?—to have a voice in the selection of who shall and who shall not enter our doors?"

"When you behave as you are doing now, you forfeit, in my estimation, all right to such consideration."

"I know I oughtn't to have used that word to you, Philip—it was very disrespectful of me, and I beg your pardon. But, if you love me, don't ask Lord Muiraven to come and stay at Fen Court."

"What possible objection can you have to the proceeding?"

"We know so little of him," she murmurs indistinctly.

"Quite enough to authorise a casual visit, such as he intends to pay us. I do not suppose, from what he said, that he will remain here more than two or three days."

"A man may make himself very disagreeable even in that time."

"But what reason have you to suppose Muiraven will do so? I never met a fellow better calculated to make his way at first sight. You are incomprehensible to me, Irene! No trouble appears too great for you to take for a "ne'er-do-well" like Oliver Ralston, or a child who has no claim upon you, like Tommy Brown; and yet, now when I wish to introduce into the house a man unexceptionable in name, birth, character, and position, you raise puerile objections, simply, as it appears to me, to give annoyance."

"I have not been in the habit of giving you annoyance, Philip."

"No, darling! of course not; but in this instance you are most unreasonable. Do you not begin to see so?"

"If it is unreasonable for a wife to wish to be consulted before her husband takes any step of importance, it may be the case."

"Step of importance!—stuff and nonsense! What do you call, then, bringing a beggar's brat into the house to be reared as your own son? You didn't stop to consult me before you pledged yourself to that undertaking, Irene!"

He turns away, puzzled and irritated by her conduct, and she sees that she has played a wrong card. If the evil that assails her is to be averted, it is not by threatening or complaint. She tries the female remedy of coaxing.

"Philip, dear!" putting her arms about him, "don't ask Lord Muiraven to come here."

"Why?"

"Because I—I don't like him."

"For what reason?"

"How can I give a reason?" impetuously. "It is not always one can say why one does or does not like a person. I don't like him—that's sufficient!"

"For you, perhaps, my dear—but not for me. It is useless to say, "Don't ask Lord Muiraven," because I have already asked him, and he has accepted the invitation. Nothing therefore remains but for you to play the hostess as agreeably as you can to him; and I trust," adds the Colonel gravely, "that, for my sake, and for your own, you will do your utmost to make our guest's stay here as pleasant as may be."

"You must do that," she returns shortly. "He is not my guest, and I have no wish he should be so. You must take the charge of him and of his pleasure yourself. I decline to share in it."

'Very well, my dear—be it so,' replies her husband coldly, as he rises to leave her. 'I hope you will think better of your inhospitable resolution; but if not, I dare say I shall be equal to the occasion. However, the spirit in which you receive my caution confirms me in one thing—Lord Muiraven's visit to Fen Court shall not be put off, if I can avoid it.'

* * * * *

In the evening she makes another attempt.

'Philip! pray do not bring Lord Muiraven to our house: I ask it of you as a favour.'

Colonel Mordaunt wheels round on his chair (he has been writing letters at his study table, while she sits beside him reading one of Mudie's last importations), and stares at his wife with unfeigned surprise.

'This is the most extraordinary thing I ever knew in my life!' he exclaims. 'Pray where, and under what circumstances, have you met with Lord Muiraven before?'

At this point-blank question, so sudden and so unexpected, Irene naturally loses somewhat of her confidence.

'Met him before! Who says I have done so?'

'No one says it; but no one could help inferring it. Your evident aversion to his becoming our guest must have its root in something deeper than a mere dislike, spontaneously conceived, for a stranger who has not taken your fancy at first sight.'

'One has at times presentiments of evil,' she replies in a low voice.

'Presentiments of fiddlesticks! I don't believe in presentiments at all, in the first place, and certainly not in those that come over one at a ball. But what may your evil presentiment tend to?'

'That Lord Muiraven's presence

at Fen Court will create dissension between us.'

'In what way?'

'I hardly know in what way; but I—I don't like him, and you evidently do—and the mere difference of opinion may be the cause of a quarrel.'

'I don't see that! I don't like many people that you do—yet we do not squabble about them—your nameless *protégé*, for instance—'

'Unfortunate little being! Cannot any topic be introduced between us without dragging him in by the neck and shoulders?'

'Hardly, when the topic is one of diversity of opinion concerning another, and when I feel that you owe me a concession, Irene. For I have given up more of my own idea of what is consistent and becoming, in permitting you to adopt that child, than you seem to be aware of.'

'Oh! let it pass, then—I concede everything. I resign my own opinion on the subject of Lord Muiraven staying with us.'

'Had you done so or not, my dear, it would have made no difference to the fact, which, as I said this afternoon, is already an established one. But I am ready to allow that I prefer your going hand in hand with me in this, as in all matters, to attempting anything like a defiance of my wishes. So I trust we have safely tided over this little difficulty, and that when Lord Muiraven appears amongst us he will find his hostess as ready to welcome him as I shall be.'

'It is utter bad taste on his part coming at all, without some intimation on mine that his visit is desired.'

'At it again, Irene!' says the Colonel with a sigh, as he returns to his papers. 'Well, I must totally refuse to continue the discussion with you. As long as I am master of Fen Court, my will here must be law.'

Which is a maxim the good man is very fond of repeating, little dreaming the while that, of all the inmates of the Court, he has his way perhaps the least of any.

* * * * *

She has done everything that she dares in order to prevent Eric Keir being thrown in her society again ; but her efforts have proved futile, and she becomes despondent. Yet she is resolved of one thing : the new guest shall receive nothing at her hands but the barest courtesy. If, after all that has passed, he is sufficiently devoid of feeling and good taste to force himself into her presence, she will make him conscious that it is unwelcome to her : she will be his hostess, and nothing further. Never again shall the hand of the man who betrayed poor Myra and trifled with herself touch hers in friendship and good-fellowship. Armed with this resolve (which pride and the remembrance of her bitter pain alone could enable her to fulfil), Irene receives Lord Muiraven on the day of his arrival at Fen Court with a degree of dignity and coldness she has never assumed to any one before.

Her husband, who has met him at the hall-door, brings him with some trepidation to the drawing-room, to be presented to a beautiful statue, who, with features pale as death and lips tightly pressed together, acknowledges the honour of his presence there in chilling tones, that would have induced an ordinary visitor to return in the same vehicle in which he came.

But Muiraven knows the cause—his heart acknowledges the justice of the sentence—and he replies so humbly to her icy welcome as half to deprecate the anger that induced it.

Not so Colonel Mordaunt, who stands by watching them, indig-

nant that Irene should so palpably disregard the warning he administered to her, and resolved to show their guest double the attention he otherwise should have done, in order to atone for his wife's unpoliteness.

He is almost fearful that her contrary mood may take the turn of not considering Lord Muiraven's comfort as she should ; but here his vexation does her wrong. The dinner that follows has been ordered with consummate care—every arrangement is perfect—too perfect, indeed, not to intimate that she feels, and intends to maintain, a great distance between herself and the man who has so suddenly been thrown amongst them.

At the dinner-table, Muiraven and the Colonel have the conversation all to themselves, for Isabella does not dare to speak, and Irene will only reply in monosyllables. They talk of politics, and hunting, and agriculture, and travel ; and then they veer round to the London season, now fast approaching.

'Do you go up to town this year?' demands Muiraven.

'I think not. My wife cares nothing for gaiety, and the love for it has mostly died out of me ; yet she used to be very fashionable before her marriage—usedn't you, Irene ?'

'Wonderfully so.'

'But you have discovered the superiority of a quiet life, I suppose, Mrs. Mordaunt.'

'I have not been out since my mother died,' she answers coldly.

'But for you,' continues the Colonel, in order to change an unpleasant topic, and addressing Muiraven, 'the gay metropolis can hardly have lost its charm. Are you looking forward to a vigorous campaign ?'

'I shall not be in town this season.'

'Indeed! you surprise me. With your advantages, I should have thought it resolved itself into a very paradise of society.'

'It was so once.'

'And how long is it since you turned misanthrope, my lord?' says the Colonel, laughing heartily at what he supposes to be his guest's affection, and never expecting to receive a serious answer to his query.

'Since two seasons ago.'

At this juncture Irene rises to leave the room. Muiraven holds the door open and gazes earnestly at her as she passes through. She chooses to take his words as covert insult—his look as malice—and answers both with a flash of indignant scorn. He interprets her glance rightly, returns to his seat at the dessert-table with a sigh.

When the gentlemen rejoin the ladies in the drawing-room, Mrs. Mordaunt professes to be sleepy; but rouses herself at their entrance and directs her attention for the remainder of the evening to the columns of the '*Morning Post*'.

Colonel Mordaunt is supremely vexed at her behaviour, but he will not mention it again to her; even after he has had a cigar with Lord Muiraven in the smoking-room, and parted with him at his bedroom door, he meets his wife in silence, and still in silence betakes himself to rest. Only, her conduct puzzles as well as vexes him, and his curiosity is all on the alert; whilst Irene, lying sleepless, reviews again and again the scene she has passed through, and wonders if she has been harsh or wrong—or could have met Muiraven differently had she wished to do—and always arrives at the same conclusion, that whilst his past conduct remains unexplained, it is impossible she can

receive him as anything but a cruel and deceitful foe.

She comes down the next morning with no kindlier feelings in her breast towards him, but conscious that his presence is losing its first strange sting for her, and that she shall be able to greet him with more ease than she had done the day before.

As she passes her morning-room she hears the sound of Tommy's voice within, and enters prepared to find him up to mischief amongst her ornaments or flowers, for, like most children, he is of an inquiring turn of mind, and apt on occasions to do great damage in his researches after the origin of all he sees about him.

But as she crosses the threshold she starts back amazed, for, at the farther end of the room, comfortably ensconced in an arm-chair, she perceives Lord Muiraven, and on his knee, playing with his watch and chain and babbling of everything that comes within the scope of his horizon, is Master Tommy. They are so engrossed with one another that for the moment they do not perceive her.

'My mamma got a tick-tick,' the child is saying, 'a very little one, with white and green stones on his back. I like my mamma's tick-tick; but he's too small for a man. When I'm *big* man, my mamma going to give me *big* tick-tick—my mamma says so,' he winds up with, confidently.

'And who is your mamma, Tommy?' inquires Muiraven.

'Don't you know my mamma? Good mamma, who loves Tommy! Why—why *there* she is!' exclaims the child, in a burst of glee, as he discovers Irene standing in the doorway, and, wriggling off his new friend's lap, rushes noisily to greet her.

'Mrs. Mordaunt!' ejaculates Muiraven, as he leaps up from his

position. 'I beg a thousand pardons; I did not perceive that you were there.'

'There is no need to apologise,' she answers as coldly, though more calmly, than before. 'Tommy, you know you have no business in this room; I have forbidden you to come here.'

'Pray don't blame the child—it was my fault; the room looked so cool and pleasant, I turned in for half an hour's reading before breakfast, and hearing his voice in the hall, called him in, and we have been amusing ourselves admirably since.'

'You forgot to bring mamma her rose this morning, Tommy,' says Irene, fixing her attention on the child. 'Won't you go and pick her one now?'

'Yes! I go get a bootiful rose—a very big one!' he answers, darting from her side.

'Mind you put on your hat!' she calls after him into the hall. Poor Muiraven is standing by the window meanwhile, looking sadly conscious of not being attended to.

'A very intelligent little boy,' he says presently, with a nervous smile; 'what age is he?'

'Three and a half.'

'Only three and a half! why, he seems to understand everything. But—pardon me—I don't quite comprehend the relationship between you—a nephew?'

'There is no relationship between us, except that of a common need. Tommy is my adopted child.'

'And you permit him to call you mother?'

'No! I never encourage him to call me by that name. His mother,' and here Irene stops a moment to recover confidence, 'his mother is gone from us; but he must call me by some name, and "mamma" is most convenient.'

'And you have adopted him—how very good of you,' returns Muiraven musingly. 'Well! I should think the little fellow would repay your kindness. I don't think I ever saw a brighter child; he interested me strongly. And he appears to have so thorough and affectionate a reverence for you——'

'Breakfast is ready,' says Irene, as she cuts short his eloquence by leading the way into the next apartment.

* * * *

Two or three days pass in the same sort of manner; outwardly all is well, though rather constrained; inwardly there is much heart-burning and unpleasantness.

The stranger (owing probably to the hostess's evident avoidance of his company) has made more than one attempt to end his visit, but Colonel Mordaunt, determined to show his wife that she cannot have everything her own way, refutes all his arguments with respect to the advisability of leaving Fen Court; and Muiraven, hoping perhaps that time may bring the opportunity he covets for an explanation with Irene, is nothing loth to linger on.

And so they continue to meet at breakfast, and luncheon, and dinner, and life is a slow torture to her. For, since she caught Muiraven and little Tommy in the morning-room together, a new dread has sprung up in her bosom: the wonder whether she will be acting right in keeping the knowledge of the relationship between them a secret from the father. The horror with which her soul recoils from the shame of making such a communication is almost swallowed up in the pain with which she contemplates a parting from the child. Until she felt it, she could not have believed



Drawing by Yousuf Ishaq

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Muiraven, however, finds time may be gained by gently coaxing Irene into a communication with Irene, is loth to linger on.

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Drawn by Frank Dickens.]

"NO INTENTIONS."

Prado de la villa de Valdepeñas?

Alcalá de Henares.

that in so short a time he would have wound himself so closely round her heart. To give up little Tommy!—to miss his dear little voice calling after her all over the house; his lisping words; his childish caresses—the idea is misery. She could hardly shrink from it more were he indeed her own. But yet, who has the better right to him, on whom has he the higher claim?

Is she injuring the boy's prospects by keeping from him the protection of so influential a father; or would the fact of his parentage turn Lord Muiraven's heart against the child?—and she would lose him only to see him turned over to the care of hirelings—brought up amongst them, as such unhappy children generally are, without one of those advantages which it is in her power, as it is her wish, to give him. Will such a discovery do her darling harm, or will it do him good? This is the thought that harasses Irene now, and adds gravity and depression to her former coldness of demeanour. The change is too palpable not to strike Colonel Mordaunt, but he does not shape his suspicions into facts until Mrs. Quekett is good enough to aid him.

'Your good lady don't look much lately, does she?' she remarks casually, as she is gathering up the money for the weekly bills, almost the only phase of the housekeeping department which remains in her hands.

'In what way, Quekett?' demands the Colonel, as he enters the amount in his ledger. 'Mrs. Mordaunt is quite well, I believe; at least, I have heard nothing to the contrary.'

'Oh! I don't mean in health exactly, though she's been going off in her looks too during the last few months; but her spirits

are lower than usual, surely—she's shut up in her room one half of the day, and terrible mopey when she's about.'

'I think you must be mistaken, Quekett; she was never what is termed boisterously inclined, and I believe she was rather put out at my inviting Lord Muiraven to the house——'

'Ah! why should she object to him, now? A fine young man as ever I saw! Most ladies would be proud of such a companion—unless, indeed, there's a reason for it!'

'What reason could there be?' says the Colonel quickly.

'Well, there's no saying—she may have met him before, and seen too much or too little of him, as it may be.'

'Mrs. Mordaunt has never met Lord Muiraven before!'

'Lor! Colonel—you must be joking!'

'It is a fact, Quekett; she told me so herself.'

'Well, then I'm mistaken, and there's an end of it.'

'Mistaken in what?—how?—do explain yourself, Quekett!'

'I'd rather not; least said, soonest mended; and if madam tells you she never met this gentleman before, of course she never did.'

'Of course not! I would sooner doubt my own word than Irene's.'

'Just so, Colonel; and therefore it would be useless to pursue the subject. But she has certainly enjoyed very bad spirits lately.'

'What do you attribute them to?'

'Who can tell what a young girl like that may be thinking of? Perhaps she's getting tired of the country——'

'She was saying only yesterday that she loved it more than ever.'

Mrs. Quekett laughs incredulously.

'Well, I'm wrong again, then, that's all. Perhaps the care of the child's too much for her.'

'I have implored her again and again to leave him more with Phoebe, but she will hardly let the boy out of her sight.'

'Ah!—hum!—it does seem to come wonderfully natural to her to be fond of him, doesn't it? Tisn't often that young women that have never been mothers take to a stranger's child like that; I hope it'll turn out for the best, Colonel. Well, if it's neither one nor the other that worries Mrs. Mordaunt, perhaps this new friend of yours puts fancies into her head.'

'How do you mean?—do speak out!'

'Lord Muiraven may remind her of some one she has known in old times, or—'

'Quekett! you are torturing me. Why on earth should a chance resemblance, even if it exists, make my wife low-spirited? Her past is gone and done with, and she is far too good and—'

'Oh! very well, Colonel—very well. Let us change the subject; it only came upon me from your being so certain they had never met before—which I'm sure I'm quite willing to believe. He's a handsome man, this new lord, isn't he? Quite the ladies' style. Young and tall, and with such fine eyes; I daresay there are a good many after him.'

'I daresay there are.'

'Quite a catch for the London ladies. I wonder why he isn't married?'

'There's plenty of time for that, Quekett.'

'I don't know, Colonel. They say "better late than never," but it doesn't apply to marriage; "no fool like an old fool" is a more appropriate motto for that.'

At this home thrust the Colonel

becomes uneasy, and tries to shift the subject.

'Lord Muiraven will remain here for some days longer, Quekett.'

'Ah! will he? Has he ever been in this part of the country before, Colonel?'

'Not that I know of; why do you ask?'

'There is an uncommon likeness between him and that little boy there. They're the very moral of each other; everybody's talking of it!'

Colonel Mordaunt flushes angrily.

'What absurd nonsense! I do beg you'll do your best to put such gossip down. If there is any resemblance, it is a mere accident.'

'It generally is, Colonel.'

'Quekett, I thought you had more sense. Do you think for a moment, that even supposing Lord Muiraven had been near Priestley before (which I am sure he has not), a man of his position and standing would lower himself by—'

'Making love to a pretty girl! Yes! I do, Colonel! and that's the long and the short of it. However, I don't wish to say any more about it; I only mentioned they were very similar, which no one who looks at them can deny. Good-night, Colonel. I hope your lady's spirits will get better; and don't you think too much about them—for thinking never mended heart nor home—and I daresay she'll come round again as natural as possible.' With which piece of consolation, Mrs. Quekett leaves her master in the very condition she aspired to create—torn asunder by doubts and suspicions, and racking his brain for a satisfactory solution of them.

Meanwhile Muiraven, who is always on the look-out for a few

private words with Irene, which she appears as determined he shall not gain, professes to have conceived an absorbing interest in Tommy, and teases her for particulars concerning his parentage and antecedents.

'I don't know when I met a child that interested me so much as this *protégé* of yours, Mrs. Mordaunt. He doesn't look like a common child. Where *did* you pick him up?'

'You speak of him just as though he were a horse or a dog; why don't you say at once, "Where *did* you *buy* him?"'

'Because I know that the only coin that could purchase him would be your benevolence. But, seriously, does he belong to this part of the country?'

'He belongs nowhere, Lord Muiraven. He is a wretched little waif and stray whose mother was first betrayed and then deserted. A common story, but none the less sad for being common. I think the heaviest penalty for sin must be incurred by those who heartlessly bring such an irretrievable misfortune upon the heads of the unwary and the innocent.'

'I quite agree with you,' he answers abruptly.

'How hardened he must be to show no signs of feeling at the allusion,' is her comment as she regards his face, half turned away.

'But to return to Tommy,' resumes Muiraven, 'do you really intend to bring him up in your own station of life—to rear him as a gentleman?'

'I have not yet decided.'

'But if you do not decide shortly you will injure the child. Having once permitted him to assimilate himself with gentlemen and gentlewomen, it will be cruelty to thrust him into the company of a lower class.'

'You misunderstand me. I do

not intend that Tommy shall ever again descend to the class from which, at all events on one side, he sprang; but, at the same time, I am not sure that Colonel Mordaunt will permit me to have him educated to enter a profession, or that it would be kindness in us to permit him to do so. He will most probably be brought up to some business.'

'Poor child!—not because he is going into business (I often wish I had been apprenticed to some good hard work myself), but because, wherever he goes, the stigma of his birth is sure to rest on him.'

'Poor child, indeed!' she repeats, with an angry flash in his direction, which Muiraven is totally at a loss to comprehend; 'but so long as he is under my protection, he shall never feel the cruel injury which has been done him by those who should have been his truest friends.'

'You say, "so long as he is under your protection," Mrs. Mordaunt; but—forgive me for questioning—suppose anything should happen to withdraw that protection from him; your death, for instance (we are not children, to be afraid to mention such a probability), or Colonel Mordaunt's disapproval; what would become of Tommy then?'

'God knows,' she answers sadly. He is speaking to her so much as he used to speak of old, when they were wont to hold long conversations on topics as far removed from love or matrimony, that she is becoming interested, and has almost forgotten the rôle she has hitherto preserved towards him of haughty indifference.

'I wish you would make me his second guardian,' he says quickly, with an access of colour in his face.

'What do you mean?'

'That, in case of this child ever

being thrown upon the world again, I am willing to carry on the protection you are so nobly according to him now!'

' You! '

' Yes, I—why not? I have no ties, Mrs. Mordaunt—nor am I likely to make any—and I have taken a fancy to this little boy of yours. My own life has been a great mistake—it would be something to guard another life, as fresh as mine was once, from the same errors.'

' You—you want to take Tommy from me—oh! Lord Muiraven, you don't know what you are asking for. I cannot part with him—I have grown so fond of him—pray don't take him away!'

In her surprise and agitation, Irene is forgetting the manner in which the proposal of her companion has been brought about; and, only remembering the prior claim he has upon the child, believes for the moment that he is aware of and intends to urge it.

' I will take every care of him,' she goes on impulsively, ' of course I will, loving him as I do—but leave him with me. He is all I have.'

' What have I said?' exclaims Muiraven, in astonishment. The question brings her to her senses.

' I—I—thought you—you—wanted to adopt the child!' she says, in much confusion.

' Only in case of his losing his present protectress, which God forbid,' he answers gravely. ' Perhaps I have been impertinent, Mrs. Mordaunt, in saying as much as I have done; but I have not been able to help observing, whilst under your roof, that your husband does not take quite so kindly

to this little bantling as you do; and I thought, perhaps, that should any difference ever arise concerning him, you might be glad to think that I was ready to carry on what you have begun—that Tommy, in fact, had another friend beside yourself. But if it was presumptuous, please forgive me!'

' There is nothing to forgive,' she answers sadly; ' the thought was kind, and some day, perhaps—'

' Perhaps—what?'

' I will tell you—or write to you the particulars—all that I know, I mean, about the sad case of this poor child.'

' Some day you will write, or tell me all the particulars about the sad case of this poor child,' he repeats slowly and musingly. ' I wonder if, some day, you will let me write, or tell you, all the particulars about a case far sadder than his can be—a case that has wrecked my earthly happiness, and made me careless of my future.'

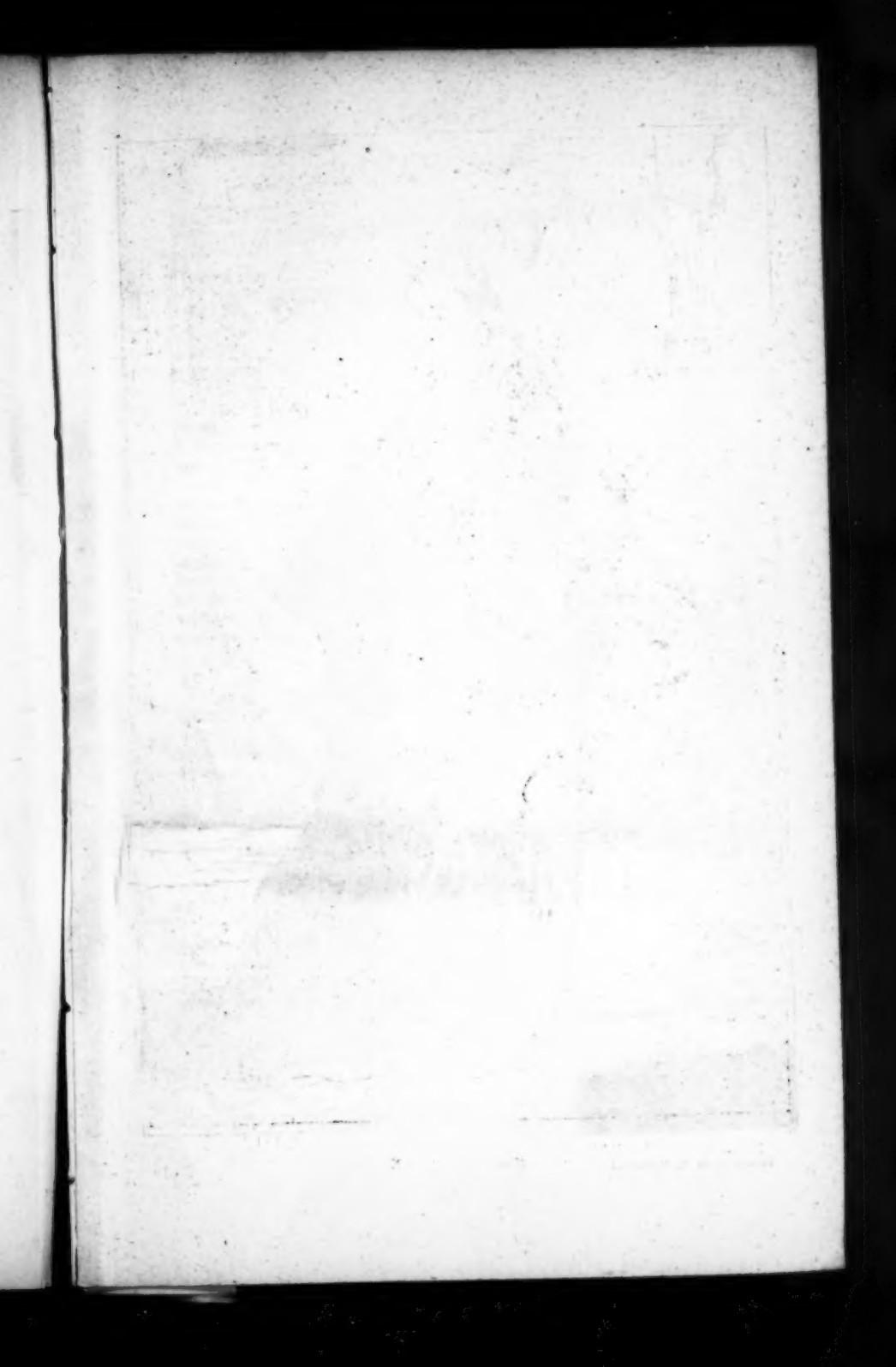
There is no mistaking the tone in which he says these words: there is a ring of despairing love in it which no laws of propriety can quell or cover over.

' Lord Muiraven!' she cries indignantly, as she retreats a few paces from him. But he is bold to pursue her and to take her hand.

' Irene! I can endure this misery no longer. It has been pent up in my breast for years, and now it will have its way. I know you have had hard thoughts of me; but, if I die for it, I will dispel them. Irene, the time is come, and I must speak to you!'

* * * * *

(To be continued.)





Drawn by M. E. Edwards.]

GUINEVERE.

GUINEVERE TO LANCELOT

WOMAN is crowned, but not in gold or bane,
I am a queen, but when my mouth is binded
Fruit to my lips it is not fruit so sweet,
While bitter bread would be a feast to me,
And each breath tremble into death,
But fate forbids the dear delight to me.

I am a queen, but Love of queens I have
I am a queen, but fettered by a curse,
Tight as the silk the Cupids pressed around
The boar, destroying Adon with a wound,
Found guilty by the Loves; and slain when found
Condemned by Venus to a death renowned.

I am a queen, but mortal is my life,
My subjects fainted, and all died before me;
All else is fallen, but me, and my realm,
That which is left, you may believe is gone,
But what was known? That was known not me,
Like unto such a state as this you never saw.

A queen commands her heart, but I am lost,
Poor little queen, why must thou ever be,
Knight of the staine and voice so blinding even,
Is not rank ice, and passion melting snow?
Wipe off the flakes that stain thy white face
Upon my crown. Down it, poor soul, and die.

ROBERT HENRYSON





Engraved by H. H. Edmunds.

GUINEVERE.

GUINEVERE TO LANCELOT.

WOMAN is crowned, but man in truth is king.
 I am a queen, but when my vassals bring
 Fruit to my lips it is not fruit to me.
 While bitter bread would be a feast with thee,
 And each breath tremble into ecstasy ;
 But Fate forbids the dear delight to be.

I am a queen, but Love of queens is lord ;
 I am a queen, but fettered by a cord
 Tight as the silk the Cupids pressed around
 The boar, destroying Adon with a wound,
 Found guilty by the Loves, and slain when found ;
 Condemned by Venus to a death renowned.

I am a queen ; be merciful to me,
 My subject Lancelot. Thine alone I see ;
 All else is fading from my swimming eyes.
 That which in me was queen, is dead or dies,
 But what was woman lives the more, and sighs
 Like weary babe athirst at midnight cries.

A queen commands not heart, but lip and knee.
 Poor little queen, why must thou royal be ?
 Knight of the smile and voice so blinding sweet,
 Is not rank ice, and passion melting heat ?
 Wipe off the flakes that stain thy whiter feet
 Upon my crown. Drown it, ye snows and sleet !

ROBERT BATSON.



SOCIAL SUBJECTS.

THE ANTI-SPIRITUALISTS—PASTORAL THEOLOGY AT EXETER HALL—DAVID GARRICK AND SOME PRIVATE THEATRICALS OF THE PERIOD—TALL HATS—THE ‘SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL’ AT THE VAUDEVILLE—TRAVELLING COMPANIES.

IN this sensational age, when we eagerly devour many columns of printed matter every day in the hope of finding something strange and startling—something decidedly different, that is, from the ‘daily round, the common task,’ and unromantic facts which go to make up that which we call life, it is not to be wondered at that there is to be found a considerable number of persons who are disciples of that school of philosophy which professes to have placed one foot on that dark territory which lies beyond the grave, and who believe that they are gradually becoming acquainted with the secrets of the after life. Such philosophy ought not to be sneered at; it is superinduced by the cold utilitarianism and inexorable materialism of the age, and arises, perhaps, from a desire to touch something poetic amid a world of prose; and, therefore, though spiritualism shrinks at the present moment from violently obtruding itself upon the notice of society through the medium of the press, it is notorious that its *séances* are not neglected, nor its phenomena unwitnessed by admiring conclave. It was Mr. Boucicault, if I remember right, who first drew attention a good many years ago, *more suo*, to the fantastic operations of Mr. Fay and the Davenport brothers; and I well remember disburdening myself of a considerable fee for the purpose of assisting at an *affaire Davenport* at the Hanover Square Rooms. That I was astonished at what I saw I cannot deny; that I believed myself to be in the presence of dexterous conjurors I unhesi-

tatingly affirm; and with equal curiosity I recently examined the cupboard and box with which Messrs. Maskelyne and Cooke perform their by no means inferior illusions. These latter gentlemen, however, make no pretence to uncanny assistance from supernatural agency, but invite their audience to use all their faculties to find out how they perform what they declare to be nothing but a clever trick—probably very simple when you come to know it. As their cupboard business is all performed in a glare of light, their dexterity far surpasses that of the Daventrys, from whom Mr. Maskelyne admits that he learned his secrets, or rather, I should say, found them out. The way in which these public entertainers get in and out of their isolated cupboard without being observed is certainly extremely ingenious, and provokes the thought that the powers of human deception are alarmingly great. And here, alas! the poetry of spiritualism finds its dull level once again; the cherished miracle is capable of a clear explanation, and the most ardent disciple feels constrained to ask himself whether, if he can be so deceived by others, it is not possible he may occasionally deceive himself, and the old saying may, perhaps, occur to him that, after all, the greatest deceivers are self-deceivers.

Most of us are probably familiar with Doyle’s illustrations which, some years ago, appeared in ‘Punch,’ and have since been separately published, under the

title of 'Mr. Pips, His Diary.' One plate represented 'A Christian gentleman denouncing the Pope' in Exeter Hall, and a very pretty picture it was. Somehow or other, Exeter Hall has, for a long time, been doomed to re-echo the Billingsgate of theological controversy, but the voices have for some few years past been somewhat fainter, and we were beginning to hope that Christians were really taking up harmoniously the points upon which they agreed, and suppressing, as far as might be, those on which they differed; but, unfortunately, at the close of last June Exeter Hall boiled and seethed beneath the stirred fires of polemical controversy. An anti-confessional meeting was organized, and Lord Shaftesbury took the chair, and the noble earl gave the entire Anglican episcopate a piece of his mind. Those of us who take the trouble to read the occasional utterances and charges of English bishops would not accuse them of undue sympathy with extreme Ritualists, but by some process of mind which I cannot venture to describe, Lord Shaftesbury appears to think that Archbishops Tait and Thompson are at the bottom of the whole mischief, and the enthusiastic meeting cheered him delightfully whenever he dropped sharply into their Graces and their suffragans. They only cheered his lordship more when he mentioned the words 'obscene' and 'bestial,' at least so I gathered from the reports in the daily papers. Now I certainly am not going to enter into the merits of the question; I will merely content myself with observing that I presume any individual has as much right to go and tell his spiritual ailments to a clergyman as he has to consult his medical adviser on his bodily infirmities. From a common-sense

point of view one would certainly think that moral and physical diseases require analogous treatment, and both must, to a certain extent, be revealed if the patient requires to be cured. However, our friends at Exeter Hall hold a different view, and they are unquestionably entitled to have their opinion. What I wish to remark upon is Lord Shaftesbury's very original idea, that if women wish to confess their sins they should confess them to other women. I fear the noble earl knows little of the female sex, if he thinks his idea has any chance of being practically carried out. My sad experience, speaking as a layman, is that sins ladies are apt to confess to each other are the shortcomings of other people. Imagine Mrs. Jones going and telling Mrs. Smith what her little peccadilloes are! Would she not entertain considerable misgivings, next time she met their common acquaintances Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Robinson, that these worthy persons, if they had recently seen Mrs. Smith, would know all about her (Mrs. Jones's) gentle faults, and that they would not be inclined to overlook them all at once? Miss A—, no doubt, often makes a confidant of Miss B—, yet she is well aware that there are just one or two little secrets Miss B— could not be altogether entrusted with, and which, if she knew, she might not make a proper use of. Miss A— might indeed feel that these particular little matters would meet with far greater sympathy if confided to the manly feeling of Captain D—, and if Miss A— had deeper conscientious scruples as to her ordinary habits of life, her temper, frivolity, and so forth, might she not feel that the parish parson would be in a far more disinterested position to give her sound advice and assistance than

either sweet Miss B—— or dear Captain D——? And if Lord Shaftesbury says that she ought to go and tell her mamma, why, there are mammas and mammas; and some maternal parents are by no means as wise or as sympathetic as they should be; and mamma might not improbably tell her confessing daughter that if she contrived to secure a husband with a nice little fortune, she need not trouble herself with any further penance. Let me suggest that Lord Shaftesbury and his enthusiastic audience at Exeter Hall should get up a petition to Parliament, praying for the institution of an order of female confessors. Lord Sandon, Mr. Newdegate, and Mr. Whalley would, no doubt, take charge of the bill in the House of Commons, and possibly the matter might be referred to a select committee. The Exeter Hall audience might be examined as witnesses—for of course they know all about confession, or they would not so confidently give an opinion—and the results would be extremely edifying and interesting. There would be no difficulty in naming the ladies who should be chosen to act; their names might be easily selected from among those who have signed petitions in favour of Woman's Rights, and who have also petitioned for the repeal of certain well-known sanitary Acts of Parliament which, in this place, I do not care more particularly to refer to.

Seriously, let me ask what possible good can accrue from public meetings called for the purpose of suppressing religious convictions? Such convictions may be utterly wrong, but they can only be met by calm argument and sober reasoning. Wholesale denunciation and abuse invariably give new vigour to the cause they are in-

tended to annihilate. Nobody but the weakest of mankind surrenders a principle because he is called a fool and a scoundrel for holding it. And it may be as well to add that nobody is so dangerous as a martyr.

The imminent revival of '*Anthony and Cleopatra*' at Drury Lane recalls to my mind the fact that I have in my possession some letters from Garrick to one of my worthy ancestors, written just before a revival of this tragedy about one hundred and twenty years ago. Amateurs were apparently not less bashful in those days than they are in these; and on the occasion of Mr. Garrick's letter a private performance of '*Julius Cæsar*' was evidently in contemplation. The letter I refer to is as follows:—

‘Thursday, August 3 (1753).

‘DEAR SIR,

‘I have this moment received your most agreeable letter, and am sorry I have not time to answer it paragraph by paragraph; but it is now ten o'clock, and I must not lose a post. Our Roman shapes at Drury Lane are so very bad that we are now making new ones for the revival of “*Antony and Cleopatra*;” and our false trimming will not be put upon them till a little time before they are wanted, as it is apt to tarnish with lying by. I cannot therefore accommodate you with dresses; and indeed if we had any that were proper (and you know you may command me and mine), how could we let you have ‘em in the month of September? for we open the 15th, and make use of those kind of dresses in every Roman and Greek play. I will enquire if there are any to be procured, and if there are you shall know directly. I

cannot well conceive how you can perform the play with less than *two* back scenes and *six* wings. I have talked to our painter, and he has sent me an estimate of the whole if they are new-done, from wh. you may take £7 10s. if you can make a shift with *one flat scene*, as we call it. If you are resolved to employ the man, write to him by the next post and direct the letter for him to be left with Verney, at Stage-door of Drury Lane Theatre.—I am, dear sir, in the greatest hurry, your most obedt. very humble servt.,

‘D. GARRICK.

‘Mrs. Garrick sends her respects with mine to your lady. Pray excuse my real hurry, for I have not half a moment to spare for “Grimini Goniūs.” I wish that my affairs would permit my flying to —— to see you; but indeed I have so much to do since the defection of some of my troops, that I have not a moment to spare for writing or jaunting. *Woodward* is turned Irish Manager. Adieu! ’

A further letter was written shortly afterwards, and dated from Hampton:—

‘DEAR SIR,

‘The *back scenes* of our stage are more than 23 feet wide, and 16 feet 16 inches high, and our wings are in proportion, consequently unfit for your place; but indeed we have no useless scenes. What we have are in constant wear, and take their turn as the different plays and entertainments are exhibited. I shall go to London (on purpose) to-morrow to consult with the painter about your scenes. He is very able and very honest. As to the shapes, I told you in my former letter that we were going to make a new set of ‘em, those we have being so scan-

dalously bad, and not fit to be worn even by the waiters. I likewise think that Mr. Rich’s wardrobe cannot furnish you with proper dresses for so full a play as “Julius Cæsar.” The Opera House, indeed, may supply you, for they exhibit so seldom, and have such quantities of them in their wardrobe, that you certainly may suit yourselves there—not but I should think the capital characters had better provide themselves with proper dresses than wear the refuse of a theatre, and which, considering the hiring, altering, carriage, &c. &c., will be more chargeable and perhaps very unworthy of the wearers. The desertion of some of my performers has occasioned me so much labour in my double capacity of manager and actor that I am afraid I cannot promise to supply you with a prologue. If you will try your hand at either or both, and will please to enclose them to me before I begin my campaign, I will endeavour to add my poetical mite. Something, perhaps, may be struck out between us; and I am very sorry that the situation of my affairs will not permit me to undertake more. But surely you cannot be at a loss for a good prologue or epilogue, when Mr. and Mrs. Greville are so near you.—I am, dear sir, your most obedt. humble servt.,

‘D. GARRICK.’

‘Mrs. Garrick presents her Respects to Mrs. —— and yourself. Upon recollection, Mr. Rich made up new shapes for his opera of “Diocletian;” but how can he spare them if his theatre opens the 12th of Septr.? I forgot to tell you that I was a little hurt at your talking of paying for anything which I could have furnished you with. Mrs. —— should have been most welcome to any acts of

civility and friendship which were in my power to bestow.'

Where was the Nathan or the Simmons of those days, that the ambitious amateurs had to go to the theatre for their dresses? I wonder how the performance went off, and whether they played 'Julius Cæsar' with two back scenes only. Possibly, somewhere or other, a record may exist of the private theatricals at Standwich in the year 1753. I cannot help thinking that Garrick himself must have gone down and given them his assistance as stage-manager. But was the play of 'Antony and Cleopatra' really revived that year? There evidently was an intention to that effect; but in the Appendix to Mr. Percy Fitzgerald's 'Life of Garrick' I find that 'Antony and Cleopatra' was not played at Drury Lane till 1758, and then the representation could not be properly called a revival. It would seem that Garrick was not a successful Antony. However, Messrs. Chatterton and Halliday, who have so often and so ably collaborated, will be sure to let us know all about it before their next revival, and I look forward to the advertisements with great interest. It is understood that Miss Wallis, who made her *début* about this time last year in the sombre drama of 'Montcalm,' will play Cleopatra; and there is every reason to believe that her performance will be thoroughly successful, though we must reluctantly admit that the art of saying blank verse appears to be in process of extinction.

Shall we ever cease to be the slaves of conventionality? I am afraid not. The advance of civilization means the strengthening and forging anew of the conven-

tional chains; and strict social laws compass our issue from the more savage states. In his well-known 'Essay on Liberty,' the late Mr. J. S. Mill remarks, 'that no one now dares to be eccentric marks the chief danger of the time.' I quote from memory, but I do not think that I am inaccurate. I most heartily wish that a good many persons would dare to be eccentric the next time the summer season in London comes round. Why on earth am I compelled to wear a lofty, black, feverish construction on my head, and a hot, tight black coat on my back, when I mingle in society? What mutual compact have we all entered into, that we may not lounge in the Row without a sense of extreme personal discomfort? A large country house in September is full of the same ladies and gentlemen who held sweet converse together in the chairs and over the rails in Hyde Park in the summer; but the gentlemen no longer deem it necessary to button themselves up so unpleasantly; and the Norfolk jacket and the serge lounging suit have nothing ungraceful about them now, and elegant comfort becomes the order of the day. Surely we might do something towards emancipating ourselves from the tyranny of the tall hat, which, taken by itself, is certainly about as ungraceful and uncomfortable a covering for our brains as our brains can possibly imagine; except, perhaps, a helmet or a bearskin—but, then, these are proper accoutrements of war, and war, of course, belongs to that state of barbarism and to those savage antecedents which Mr. Darwin loves to remind us of. But why cannot we relegate all our barbarism to war, if war, in spite of Mr. Richards, M.P., must still exist? The peace of Rotten Row might not be disturbed save by matrimonial ma-

nœuvrers; and the outworks constructed by Messrs. Lincoln and Bennett have never yet proved to be invulnerable protections against the darts of the fair ones. The lamented Mr. Robson, in 'Boots at the Swan,' used to say that he measured a gentleman by his gloves and his boots; but I have never heard any philosopher remark that he knew a gentleman by his hat. To be sure, in the hunting-field the sombre abomination has become *de rigueur*, and has taken the place of the old hunting-cap; but both are equally uncomfortable. What is to be done? 'Junius' showed us, not very long ago, that the Prince of Wales bore the weight of Fashion on his shoulders. Shall we get up a deputation to his Royal Highness at the commencement of next season, and beg and pray of him to relieve us of our weight of woe? Alas! Fashion is a terrible Moloch, and requires many sacrifices of personal ease. Those hatters and tailors are the chief priests, and they exact from us an almost sublime severity of costume. When we go out in the regulation evening attire, we feel that we all are dressed exactly alike, just as interesting youthful twins are. I own I don't see any way out of it. Nothing but a social earthquake will make us change our habits in this respect; and when that comes, we shall perhaps find ourselves worse off than we were before. We might have to go back to powder and black velvet, and all look like Mr. Clayton, as Joseph Surface, in the 'School for Scandal.' Well, it might be very appropriate. There are a good many Joseph Surfaces about nowadays.

This reminds me of the unprecedented run which Sheridan's comedy has recently enjoyed. It is useless to ask why this has been

the case, and I doubt if any satisfactory answer could be given. The parties most satisfied are, probably, the lossees of the theatre; but I wish to make a remark or two upon the observations of a certain magazine critic upon Mr. Clayton's performance of Joseph Surface. This writer, indulging in the *ex cathedra* style in which the ordinary dramatic critic delights, informs his readers that 'no character was ever more clearly and unmistakably drawn by its author than that of Joseph Surface,' and therefore 'that it is difficult to understand how any actor could, for the mere affectation of originality, be so oblivious of the proprieties of his art as to give any other rendering.' I beg sincerely to congratulate Mr. Clayton upon the fact that he has been made the subject of such a rebuke, and has at the same time been the means of exposing the shallowness of ordinary dramatic criticism. To say that the character of Joseph Surface is 'clearly and unmistakably drawn' by the author of the comedy is merely a dogmatic way of stating that the assertor's view of that character is the right one, and that everybody else's is wrong. And I do not think that I am far wrong in saying that the majority of play-goers who assisted at the three hundred and odd representations of the 'School for Scandal' would incline to the opinion that Mr. Clayton's rendering of Joseph Surface was certainly clever and subtle, and at the same time extremely natural. 'Elia' once complained 'that Joseph Surface, to go down now, must be a downright revolting villain,' and this, I suppose, is the coarse theory of Mr. Clayton's critic. Indeed, the critic goes further, and lays down the canon that 'an actor should remember that Joseph is the foil of Charles.' I take leave to observe,

that if an actor was ever taught such a lesson, the sooner he forgets it the better. The actor who regards the part he has to play merely as the foil to some other character is no actor at all; the town-crier might as well speak his lines. The actor must, indeed, study his part in correlation to the plot of the play; but he would have a very low idea of his art if he sank all individuality in striving to become merely the 'foil' of somebody else. In his rendering of Joseph Surface, of the originality of which his critic ridiculously complains, Mr. Clayton again assured the public that he is an earnest, thoughtful, and conscientious actor, and far above the mean insinuation that he only wanted to show 'how well he could play the gay Charles.' The traditions of the stage are extremely useful in their way; but we should be sorry to see them blindly adhered to at the expense of originality. Certainly we have not much reason to complain that the majority of our actors and actresses are *too* original. Mr. Clayton's antecedents fully justify us in saying, that whatever part he undertakes he will perform with all the care and elaboration which distinguish the true artist. And we wish him all success.

As I have touched upon dramatic subjects, I cannot forbear noticing the fact that travelling companies of actors are remarkably upon the increase, and that before long the large provincial theatres will be absolutely without any fixed company at all; and I cannot but think that play-goers will soon come to regard this phenomenon as a serious disaster. No doubt, it is very superior to the single 'star' system, as far as the public in the provinces are concerned; but I fear lest it should result in

a great misfortune to the profession, and so eventually to the play-going portion of the public. Provincial theatres were once regarded as the nurseries of the drama; but we can look upon them as such no longer, and we begin to wonder when and how the aspirants to histrionic fame are to learn their business. It was from the rising artists of the stock companies at Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Edinburgh, Brighton, &c., that the metropolitan managers recruited their strength. But stock companies are fading beneath the influence of the travelling companies organised by various theatrical speculators for the production in the provinces of the works of certain popular authors, as any one who studies the columns of the 'Era' will soon discover. At Manchester, Liverpool, and other large towns, company succeeds company, and there is considerable reason to fear that the fashion may extend to London; though there is reason to believe that in London the experiment, so far as it has been tried, has not been very successful. And then, as a not altogether unnatural consequence, we find London managers pushing into the foremost ranks young aspirants to dramatic fame, who, apparently thinking there is some royal road to stage renown, have contemptuously spurned that drudgery and training without which scarcely one genius in a century can hope to succeed. A writer may be endowed with all the qualities necessary to the success of a dramatic author; but if he does not practically understand the scenic requirements and constructional technicalities of the stage, his play, however readable in the library, is almost certain to be a failure when represented in the theatre. So with an actor. Great as his natural talent may be, it is indis-

pensably necessary to his ultimate success that he should submit his genius to cultivation, and his faculties to that severe training, without which, in every profession, failure may be confidently predicted. There are, of course, many youthful and enthusiastic persons who repudiate this doctrine altogether as applicable to their own particular condition, and are con-

vinced that, if they could only get the chance, they could win a battle, rule France, institute a new religion, surpass Garrick, and square the circle. But to these, as well as to all blazing principles, of which we hear a good deal nowadays, there is nothing like the application of cold water judiciously but plentifully supplied.

FREE LANCE.

IN THE SUNSHINE.

THE peach hangs heavy on the garden-wall,
See, love, see !

The peach hangs heavy on the garden-wall ;
'Tis ripe, rose-tinted, and ready to fall.

Fruit meet for thee and me,
'Tis ripe as ripe can be,
May we not pluck it from the garden-wall ?

The sweet birds warble near the garden-wall,
Hush, love, hush !

The sweet birds warble near the garden-wall ;
With melody their mates they softly call ;

Each woos unto his nest
The one that each loves best ;
Warbling so sweetly by the garden-wall.

Warm lips are waiting by the garden-wall,
Yes, love, yes !

Warm lips are waiting by the garden-wall ;
They wait love's kisses, and they claim love's all :

If thy heart's-love be mine
As my heart's-love is thine,
May we not tell it by the garden-wall?"

S. WADDINGTON.



NEW BOOKS RECEIVED.

'Political Women.' By Sutherland Menzies. *Henry S. King & Co.*

'Studies and Romances.' By H. Schütz Wilson. *Henry S. King & Co.*

'The Queen's Shilling.' By Capt. Arthur Griffiths. *Henry S. King & Co.*

'Over the Dovrefjelds.' By J. S. Shepard. *Henry S. King & Co.*

'Hodge Podge. A Rhyme.' *Williams & Norgate.*

'POLITICAL Women' should have been reviewed last month, had it not been received, unfortunately, just one day after we went to press. However, it is never too late to say a good word for a good book, and this book has evidently been written with so much care, that it is a valuable as well as an interesting addition to our historical compilations. The biographies of such women as the Duchesses de Longueville, de Chevreuse, and de Montbazon—of the Duchess of Portsmouth, Madame des Ursins, and Sarah Jennings, afterwards Duchess of Marlborough, are romances in themselves, whilst the miserable endings to most of their political intrigues stand out like warning beacons to such of their sex as aspire in the present day to emulate their unenviable notoriety. As the author in his Preface very justly remarks, a woman ought never to take a hand in the game of political life. 'Her place should be at the player's elbow to warn and advise him—to point out an unperceived chance—to share in his success—more than all, to console him, should luck run against him. Thus, whilst all her better qualities would be brought into play, all her weaker would not in any wise be at stake. We would put it, therefore, to the womanly

conscience: is it not a hundred times more honourable to exercise, so to speak, rights that are legitimately recognised, though wisely limited, than to suffer in consideration, and often in reputation, from an usurpation always certain of being disputed ?'

Such remarks apply especially to those women of the nineteenth century who aspire to jostle man in the battle of political life, and who will find, should their endeavours ever prove successful, the truth of the old adage, 'The weakest go to the wall.' This subject has been so often and so ably commented upon, that it would be useless to enter on it here; but, as 'London Society' has never yet shown itself to be a vehicle for the wrongs of the 'shrieking sisterhood,' it may be permitted to us to say that no better argument against their unfeminine aspirations could be put into their hands than this mournful record of the complete failure of some of the highest specimens of their sex. Such women as the Duchess de Longueville and the Duchess of Marlborough are few and far between; and where they failed, surrounded as they were by all the advantages of birth, fortune, wit, and beauty, it is little likely the common herd will find success. They possessed all the gifts by which their sex appeal to the sympathies of men; they were aided and abetted by their lovers and admirers, the chiefs of the political world; and yet the upshot of most of their intrigues was to harm those whom they desired to benefit, and to bring upon themselves the mortification of shame, defeat, and, in several instances, an unhappy death. We wish 'Political Women' could be read from end to end of

England; and we recommend it to the notice of every woman who wishes to rival the sex to whom she was ordained by the voice of God to be subjected.

* * * * *

'Studies and Romances' looks like a collection of reprinted magazine articles; but there is no intimation on the title-page to tell us it is so. It contains a dozen or more very smartly-written occasional papers and tales, of which we prefer the papers, 'The Loves of Goethe' (of which the name was Legion), 'Shakespeare in Blackfriars,' 'Two Sprigs of Idelweiss,' and 'Agnes Bernauerin,' as those which appeal most nearly to our individual taste; but they are all the work of a cultivated mind, and sufficiently various to suit all tastes. 'Studies and Romances' is just the book to take to the seaside or on a journey. We wish we could have had an opportunity of recommending it to our holiday-seekers sooner. As it is, however, it will do just as well for a rainy day or the fireside; and those who like brief sketches in literature will thank us for drawing their attention to the fact.

* * * * *

Mr. H. King is happy in his publications this month; for the third on our list, 'The Queen's Shilling,' is an exceedingly bright and naturally-written novel. There is a great deal to be said on the side of nature; for without it the choicest language or most carefully-detailed plot will fail to please. The plot of 'The Queen's Shilling' is poor and overstrained. It aspires to be sensational, and is only unlikely, without creating curiosity. Captain Arthur Griffiths writes so well that he should take heed in future to let his *scenario* be as natural as his *dramatis persona*. He is so much at home in barrack life and the *salons* of good society,

that everything he gives us on these subjects savours of truth, and, we may well believe, were transcribed from personal experience; but when he comes to concocting a mystery with which he never met in real life, his work loses its stamp of genuineness, and degenerates into fiction. It is a great secret of success to write only on such topics as we are familiar with. Captain Griffiths knows military life and manners; he knows also—or rather, since a critic should never become personal, let us say he has probably *heard* of such a thing as love; and love and war will at all times furnish him with quite as much incident as he may require to build his novels on; so we recommend him to leave sensation alone for the future.

* * * * *

We do not quite see the object or the use of Mr. J. S. Shepard's 'Over the Dovrefjelds.'

He affirms that it is written as a species of guide-book for such travellers as have not yet explored Norway; but, as he mentions the names of several other publications of the same kind, and by authors with a better claim to make themselves heard by the public, we do not see the necessity which called for a narrative of his personal experiences, especially as it is not much more than a record of where he went, and contains no information of a novel or valuable kind. As the history of a month's touring, it is not worse, perhaps, than others (although it is written in a very flat and matter-of-fact manner, and the author's tendency to interlard his own observations with hackneyed quotations becomes most wearisome); but we think that the growing idea in the minds of the present generation, that every man and woman who travels must

'make a book' about it, is an idea to be checked. In a century when railroads are as common as legs, and every one sees foreign countries for himself, we do not require to be enlightened by every youth just emancipated from college, whose father allows him so much for a few weeks' holiday before he settles down to work. If there is anything new or worth writing about, it is sure to be written about by some one who can command a hearing; and the worth of remarks, un-supplemented by experience, is very small. We do not wish to discourage Mr. Shepard more than any other man; but the amount of new writers who daily crop up to make a few feeble remarks, and retire again into the obscurity from which it would have been better they had never emerged, is growing into a nuisance, especially for those who are doomed to review their splutterings. An author should never give the public the impress of his imagination until that imagination has proved itself capable of working by itself. A book of travels should either be a handbook of useful information, which reduces it to a publication of a strictly businesslike character, or a glorious burst of description from a mind with sufficient art to render the reproductions of its impressions free from monotony, and sufficient experience to make its opinions a safe landmark for those who may come after. 'Over the Dovrefjelds' is neither one nor the other; and, unpretending as the volume is, we wish, for his

own sake, that the author had not been so eager to retail what he has seen beyond the circle of his own relations.

We cannot say, either, that we are interested in 'Hodge Podge,' which is called a rhyme, but is intended for a satire. A satire, especially one that deals with the political and social abuses of the day, should be very funny, to avoid being very dry; and 'Hodge Podge' is not funny—at least, if it is, we have not discovered it. The rhyme, which runs through some 190 pages, embraces pretty nearly every vexed question of the times, and discusses it in doggrel which is meant to be cutting and satirical, but is in reality commonplace and dull. We quote the last stanza :

"Call you that music?" cried a donkey
near.
"The best I have," said Philomel,
afraid;
"But fain would I learn better."
"Then give ear!"
Replied the donkey. Whereupon he
brayed
So loud and long the pasture thrilled
with fear;
And the poor bird, disgusted and dismayed,
To deepest woods precipitated flight,
And since, sings only hid in shades by
night."

We are so obtuse that we have not clearly discovered the reason why the poet has given us the above fable; but we conclude Philomel and the Donkey personate the author and the public. Yet which is Philomel, and which is the donkey? We pause for a reply.







• Drawn by H. Johnson.]

•WHAT SHALL I SAY TO HIM?

LONDON SOCIETY.

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